

# Angel Whispers

SPRING, 2018

*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.*



**Families First Society**  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN  
[www.familiesfirstsociety.ca](http://www.familiesfirstsociety.ca)

#thisisourvillage

## Hello to our Angel Whispers families,

If you are reading this newsletter, you have likely been touched by the loss of a baby...whether you are a bereaved mother or father, a bereaved grandparent, a bereaved family member or perhaps you're a friend who is wanting to find out how to best support a loved one who has experienced the devastating loss of a baby. My heart goes out to those of you grieving the loss of your sweet baby.

Losing a baby is a devastating loss...be gentle with yourself as you grieve. Please know that you are not alone and that with time and support, the intensity of the emotions you are feeling now will soften. Know that love is not determined by gestation, so whether your loss happened early in pregnancy, late in pregnancy, at birth or after birth, you are grieving for your much loved and wanted baby along with the hopes and dreams for the future you have created with your baby.

It's difficult to understand why babies die...often there are no answers to our questions of 'why'. There are so many types of loss: miscarriage (early or late), blighted ovum, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, stillbirth, neonatal death. The circumstances of each family's loss is unique, but what bonds us all is that devastation, heartache and lost dreams that we experience. When we lose a baby, we not only lose a baby, but we also lose a 1 year old, a 5 year old starting kindergarten, an 18 year old graduating from high school, a 25 year old graduating from university, a 28 year old getting married or a 30 year old becoming a parent. There are so many milestones to grieve and mourn.

My hope for those of you that have experienced the loss of a baby is that you are being well supported by family and friends. Sadly, far too often, the earlier pregnancy losses are dismissed by others, and the families that are grieving the loss of a baby lost early in pregnancy experience a disenfranchised grief, where they are deprived of their 'right' to grieve. Let me reassure you that you have every right to grieve and mourn for your baby. There is no deadline for your grief. Grief is the price we pay for love, you will love your baby for a lifetime, therefore, you will grieve for your baby for a lifetime.

With early losses, the expectant mom may not be showing yet so to others the pregnancy isn't visually tangible, therefore others don't feel the same connection to the baby as the parents do. This doesn't justify their lack of support or empathy in any way. The expectation from others often becomes a message of 'buck up', 'get over it' or 'move on'. Families face the typical 'cliché' comments:

"You are young, you can try again."

"There must have been something wrong with the baby."

"At least it was early, you weren't attached to the baby yet."

"God needed another angel."

"Be thankful for what you have."

As well intentioned as these comments are, they hurt and don't provide comfort to grieving parents.

So many unanswered questions remain from the experience of losing a baby...

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often there is not enough information available to provide answers and comfort to grieving families.

One of the types of loss that leaves parents heartbroken, devastated and confused is ectopic pregnancies. Approximately 1 in 80 pregnancies results in an ectopic pregnancy that implants outside the uterus. Sadly there is no way to save an ectopic pregnancy. Bereaved parents often experience a ripple effect with their grief associated to their loss resulting from an ectopic pregnancy as they grieve for their baby, the hopes and dreams and if surgery was required, it may have meant the removal of one or both fallopian tubes and the resulting physical recovery time required from surgery. Surgery necessitating the removal of both tubes, often results in grieving the loss of the ability to conceive naturally in the future.

We have had several families reach out to us over the years that have experienced an ectopic pregnancy. They feel isolated and alone as they often don't know others that have experienced this type of loss. In honor of these families and their sweet angels, this newsletter focuses on ectopic pregnancies and is dedicated to you. This newsletter includes information on ectopic pregnancies and the journey

through grief and mourning, along with one family's story of loss.

If you have experienced the loss of a baby through ectopic pregnancy, know you are not alone and that there are others that understand. My hope is that you find comfort within the next few pages. In addition to this newsletter, there are wonderful online resources available for those that have experienced an ectopic pregnancy:

- [www.ectopicpregnancy.co.uk](http://www.ectopicpregnancy.co.uk)
- [www.ectopic.org.uk](http://www.ectopic.org.uk)

Wishing you all a gentle spring filled with hope and healing!

With Love & 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)*



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

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

# The Mourner's Bill of Rights

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you.

The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

**1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief.**

No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.

**2. You have the right to talk about your grief.**

Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.

**3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.**

Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

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**4. *You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.***

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

**5. *You have the right to experience "griefbursts."***

Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.

**6. *You have the right to make use of ritual.***

The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.

**7. *You have the right to embrace your spirituality.***

If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.

**8. *You have the right to search for meaning.***

You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people

may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

**9. *You have the right to right to treasure your memories.***

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.

**10. *You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.***

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

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## **About Dr. Alan Wolfelt: *Author, educator, and grief counselor***



Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him.

Perhaps best known for his model of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. Founder and Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, Dr. Wolfelt presents numerous educational workshops each year for hospices, hospitals, schools, universities, funeral homes, community groups, and a variety of other organizations. He also teaches the 4-day trainings described on this website in beautiful Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dr. Wolfelt is a popular media

resource who regularly provides his expertise to many top-tier television shows, newspapers, and magazines. Recipient of the Association for Death Education and Counseling’s Death Educator Award, Dr. Wolfelt is also a faculty member of the University of Colorado Medical School’s Department of Family Medicine.

“Mourning in our culture isn’t always easy. Normal thoughts and feelings connected to loss are typically seen as unnecessary and even shameful. Instead of encouraging mourners to express themselves, our culture’s unstated rules would have them avoid their hurt and ‘be strong.’”

“But grief is not a disease. Instead, it is the normal, healthy process of embracing the mystery of the death of someone loved. If mourners see themselves as active participants in their healing, they will experience a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in life”

To learn more about Dr. Wolfelt and his Centre for Loss and his extensive Resource Library, visit <http://www.centerforloss.com/>.

# Renee's and Richard's Story

*Where do I start, I guess it makes sense to go back to the beginning....*

We have been trying to get pregnant for almost 4 years now. We started getting tested after a year of no success.

The first thing that was a concern, was that my period cycle had changed and it was never on the same schedule month to month, I was possibly not ovulating every month, based on a couple other signs they said it was possible I had Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. I tried my first fertility drug Clomid and that helped me to ovulate but after 6 months, still no result.

We then got on the list for the 1st fertility clinic. I had 4 IUIs done. First 3 were on the fertility pill Letrozole, I ovulated, things looked good but no success and the last one was on injectable drugs. I had lots of follicles and a really good chance this time, however I ended up getting some painfully cysts and had to go to the hospital and still no pregnancy. At this point the fertility doctor categorized us with Unknown fertility, with no explanation of why weren't getting pregnant. I was fed up at this point and tired emotionally and physically so we took a break from treatment and from the project of trying to get pregnant as this is what it becomes.

After a few months we re-grouped and decided to go to another clinic that had just opened a year ago. From all the research I have done, I already figured they would suggest not wasting time with IUIs and go straight to IVF.

We thought about it and at our age, we figured we should just do it. We felt comfortable with the clinic. They were very easy to communicate with and we went with their instructions. Now with IVF it's not just the money, there are lots of ultrasounds and visits to the clinic, because once you start the injectable, they have to keep an eye on you through ultrasounds: 1) so your eggs don't get overstimulated

and 2) timing is everything in terms of the retrieval of eggs. At the point of egg retrieval I took time off, almost 2 weeks because I also wanted to be off after the embryos were implanted. I was definitely happy I took that time off during egg retrieval because you are put to sleep and have some cramping after. I also got sick right after due to the anesthetic.

The retrieval went well, they got 10 eggs but only 4 actually fertilized. At this point we decided to implant 2 and freeze the other 2. The implantation itself again, went well and then it was just to wait to see if I was pregnant.

***After 2 weeks we got the amazing news I was pregnant!***

After 2 weeks we got the amazing news I was pregnant! We were so happy but it was still a hard time because I was still paranoid. We still had faith and were embracing the thought that after so long we finally have this gift. At this point I was 4 weeks.

At week 5, things started to go bad. I got this bleeding and thought I was miscarrying and went to the hospital but everything was fine, my HCG levels were increasing and by a lot. My sister even joked I'm probably having twins but this would not be confirmed until the 7th week when the embryo would be big enough and I could see a heartbeat.

Then the first severe pain happened in my abdomen. I was curled up in a ball, cold sweating, shaking and vomiting. I was able to make it to the car to the hospital. They confirmed they could see one sac developing but nothing else.

This first time the hospital and the clinic had me checked they chalked it up to possible cysts on my ovaries due to the fertility drugs. Every week the severe pain would happen and it started accelerating. Then at the 7th week ultrasound, they saw that the embryo was not at the size it should be. I had the pain again but they told me to come back next week to double check on growth. During this time the nurses kept asking me if I was heavily bleeding during the severe pains and I was not, just the normal pregnancy spotting.

Fast forward to the next week (8th week), the ultrasound confirmed no heart beat and the embryo was not going to be viable. I was going to miscarry. That was devastating; the doctor suggested I would pass it naturally. I couldn't process, and after the doc and nurse left, my husband and I stayed in the room and cried for a while. We went home to process things and after being home for an hour, the pain hit, it was so bad this time, I couldn't make it to the car, I told my husband I needed an ambulance. The hospital treated me for pain and sent me for an ultrasound and told me to contact the clinic. They assumed it was the miscarriage and sent me home with Tylenol 3 after giving me morphine and Gravol. Because I was so tender they did not do an internal ultrasound but still did not see anything else. I contacted the clinic and said I cannot wait for this miscarriage to happen naturally. I can't function with this pain and emotionally it was hard to still be pregnant but know I'm going to miscarry. They prescribed me a medication to help my cervix contract to pass the sac.

I took the medication and miscarried on Saturday night July 1st. I was now dealing with this loss and disappoint-

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ment but I figured this would at least be the last of that severe pain. Nope, on Wednesday it happened. I spoke to a nurse and she suggested maybe I did not pass the complete sac, that I could try the medication again, I however pushed for an ultrasound first, because I believed I did pass the whole thing and always figured there was something more. I was booked in for the Friday. Then again Thursday, the severe pain again but I still had Tylenol 3's so I was able to "manage" it.

I was now thinking this is accelerating and starting to get frustrated. Friday we went in at 10 a.m. for the ultrasound and the doctor said he can see something but wasn't clear because there was some blood and needed me to go to a specialized lab to get a better visual. Still no idea of what was happening, we had an appointment but it was later that afternoon and on the north side and we live on the southside.

We finally get to this ultrasound and they took a lot of ultrasound pictures, the technician brought in a doctor and when he saw the pics, he told us to go immediately to the hospital and the results will be there, when we get there.

From the time he said that and the look on his face we should have known it was bad but we still were not informed so we didn't think it was as bad as it turned out. We got to the ER and when we went up to the reception, they already had the info from the specialists when we arrived. We were told they will call me in as soon as a room was ready. This took about 5 mins. I was set up in a room got the gown on and waited for a doctor to find out what was going on, we were still naive to the situation.

At this point physically I was feeling some tenderness and some discomfort but no serious pain. I went to the washroom and all of a sudden it hit me. The pain came back with fury. By the time I got back to the room I

told my husband that I was in pain to get a nurse. This time it was so much worse. It accelerated and it was so bad I was begging for morphine, almost passing out, vomiting, curled up on the bed crying and begging for help. As the nurses were struggling to get an IV because I couldn't stay still and sweating profusely, the doc finally came and gave the news that my right fallopian tube had ruptured due to an ectopic pregnancy, I had a large amount of blood in my abdomen and needed emergency surgery. There were bits and pieces that my husband had to tell me about because I was so delirious and the pain so overwhelming.

***The next day my husband was there bright and early; he still looked worried and tired.***

Everything happened fast. When they took me to the OR, my husband told me he did not get any update and was waiting to see me in recovery for 2 ½ hours. (Friday evening) During this time he told my family. Everyone is in Toronto; but thankfully my parents were up from Trinidad. My dad immediately bought a ticket for my mom to come up the next day, my dad came the following.

When I came out of recovery I was so groggy, sore and totally out of it. I saw my husband, I have never seen him that worried, he cried, he was so worried about me. I don't know how long he stayed but I know it was late (July 7th). I could barely stay awake so I told him to leave and get some sleep. I slept and woke up at 2 a.m., thirsty and in some pain. I realised I was hooked up to IVs and I had a catheter but did not get any information on what happened during the surgery.

After weeks of healing and talking things through, I told my husband, even though I went through all the physical pains, I would not have liked to be in his position, in the waiting room while I'm in surgery, worrying and not knowing what was happening to me.

The next day my husband was there bright and early, he still looked worried and tired, he could not sleep and said he did not want to leave me last night and felt like it wasn't fair that he got to go home and I went through all of this. He told me my mom was coming in the afternoon and he would have to leave and get her. We spoke to the nurse and asked when we would see the doc, of course they couldn't say but said they would remove the catheter and would like for me to try getting up and walking because it was important for me to move. This was for healing, I was skeptical because when I moved in bed, even an inch, it hurt, I was extremely tender and felt like things were pulling.

I knew with all the pain I was dealing with for weeks that my healing would not be normal. From the beginning my husband was the best nurse, but he really stepped up his game at the hospital. He did everything I needed, helping me adjust myself in bed, helping with trying to eat, drink etc. When my mom came I was so happy and so was she, to see that I was okay but I think it was hard for her to see me like that.

The nurse persuaded me that getting up the next day, was normal and she was going to remove the catheter and I should get up. I really did not want to but I agreed. It was so painful just going from lying to sitting was horrible, it was decided that I would get up to use the toilet. My husband took the initiative to be the one to help me and hold me. Excruciating pain to walk and worse to go to sitting position on the toilet, I had problems peeing fully

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because of the pain. I tried it twice and then it became too much and I told them I can't pee, it hurts. The decision was made I was not ready to get up, they put the catheter back in.

My mom had a hard time seeing me walk and move because I was in so much pain. My husband took her home about 8 p.m. and came back because we were still waiting to see the doc. The doctor finally came into my room about 11 p.m. and gave us the news.

My right fallopian tube that had the Ectopic pregnancy had ruptured and blood had been collecting in my abdomen. They had to remove that fallopian tube as well as my left as it was distended because of the blood that was in my abdomen (Salpingectomy).

That was hard to process; I now have no fallopian tubes. I had lost a lot of blood and needed 4 blood transfusions, two during the operation and two the next day because I lost so much. I also needed oxygen as my blood levels were low and an ECG just to make sure my heart was okay. My lungs were weak and I was given an apparatus to blow into to strengthen my lungs, even when I was out of the hospital, 3 times a day.

My husband did not like how little the doctor was telling us but, realized when we saw him for a follow up that he did not want to upset me right after the surgery and only told me what I needed to know at the time. I was in bad shape in the hospital, I could have lost my life. What I experienced only happens to 1% of the population. It's very rare to have an intrauterine pregnancy and also have an ectopic pregnancy; usually it is one or the other, that's possibly why no one caught it before this. However the severe pain and high levels of my HCG, for us, should have been an indicator and a possibility of ectopic should have been considered and caught earlier to save me all that pain and grief. Unfortunately ectopic pregnancies are easily missed and in

my case it was only caught when it became life threatening and I was in extreme pain.

Coming out of the hospital I felt like I was emotionally stunted because I was still processing and when I did get upset it hurt my abdomen. I went into survival mode to just stunt my emotions and focus on the physical recovery. My husband had to now take on the role of nurse/caregiver. I needed help for everything, besides feeding myself. He had to help me get up from lying down to a sitting position, to standing. He had to help me get undressed and dressed. He had to help me get to the toilet, get undressed, sit and

***Physically I was doing more for myself by week 3, I was surprised by how difficult the emotional/mental part was.***

get up from the toilet. He had to help me move my legs from sitting to lying down position, every movement hurt.

I could not sit up for weeks. Lying down or slowly walking was all I could do. I did have to get up and walk because that was key to healing and for my abdomen not to get tight. Thankfully my parents were there to do everything else, groceries and cook, because my husband needed to be on call for me. My dad gave me a hug a couple times but he was worried and hesitant because of my incisions. My mom is tiny so I needed someone bigger to hold me but she was able to help more the following week to get me to the bathroom. Poor hubby, every time I had to use the bathroom he had to assist me and that was often, because I was drinking a lot of water. I also was still bleeding/spotting and using pads, which he had to help me with; he saw a lot more than a man should

(lol). He really was the best nurse I ever had. It just hurt him to see me like that and everything that happened, I would lie in bed and cry every night, when everyone went to bed and it was quiet. Once I called him, he knew from my voice that I didn't need to use the bathroom but I needed him to lie with me. In bed I needed a body pillow since lying was uncomfortable and at night he could only reach for me and not get as close. That was probably good anyway because of how tender, sore and bruised I was.

Physically I was doing more for myself by week 3, I was surprised by how difficult the emotional/mental part was. A month after and I am still accepting both losses, of the miscarriage and my fallopian tubes. I mourn a loss of a future I dreamed of and feeling like a failure as a woman, including feeling less than a woman without my fallopian tubes. I have to now come to terms that I have no chance of ever conceiving naturally, I will only ever be able to conceive through IVF. I have to now live with all these experiences, emotions, losses and somehow move. It's a part of who I am and I will not give myself any other option but to look forward with hope.

## **Can You Help?**

*Contact Fort  
Saskatchewan Families  
First Society at  
780-998-5595 to donate or  
volunteer.*



# Ectopic Pregnancy

Information Source - Mayo Clinic - [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ectopic-pregnancy/symptoms-causes/syc-20372088](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ectopic-pregnancy/symptoms-causes/syc-20372088)

## Normal and ectopic pregnancy

An ectopic pregnancy occurs when a fertilized egg implants somewhere other than the main cavity of the uterus. Pregnancy begins with a fertilized egg. Normally, the fertilized egg attaches itself to the lining of the uterus.

An ectopic pregnancy most often occurs in one of the tubes that carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus (fallopian tubes). This type of ectopic pregnancy is known as a tubal pregnancy. In some cases, however, an ectopic pregnancy occurs in the abdominal cavity, ovary or neck of the uterus (cervix).

An ectopic pregnancy can't proceed normally. The fertilized egg can't survive, and the growing tissue might destroy various maternal structures. Left untreated, life-threatening blood loss is possible.

Early treatment of an ectopic pregnancy can help preserve the chance for future healthy pregnancies.

## Symptoms

At first, an ectopic pregnancy might not cause any signs or symptoms. In other cases, early signs and symptoms of an ectopic pregnancy might be the same as those of any pregnancy — a missed period, breast tenderness and nausea. If you take a pregnancy test, the result will be positive. Still, an ectopic pregnancy can't continue as normal.

Light vaginal bleeding with abdominal or pelvic pain is often the first warning sign of an ectopic pregnancy. If blood leaks from the fallopian tube, it's also possible to feel shoulder pain or an urge to have a bowel movement — depending on where the blood pools or which nerves are irritated. If the fallopian tube ruptures, heavy bleeding inside the abdomen is likely — followed by lightheadedness, fainting and shock.

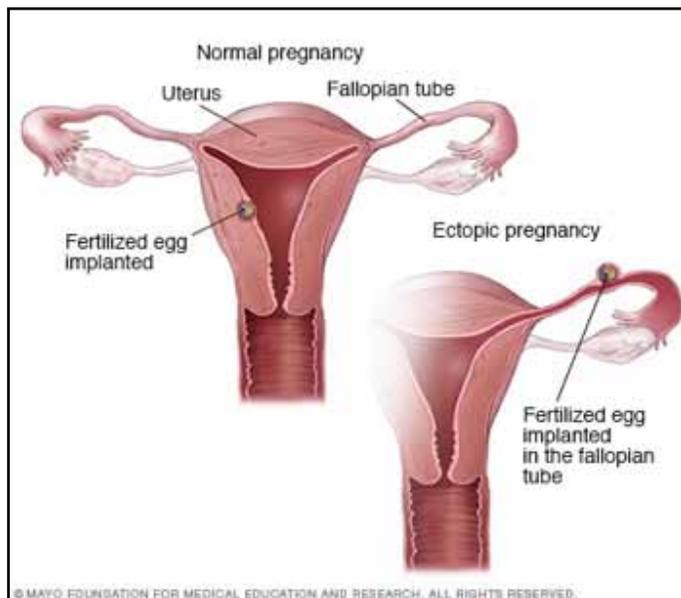
## When to see a doctor

Seek emergency medical help if you experience any signs or symptoms of an ectopic pregnancy, including:

- Severe abdominal or pelvic pain accompanied by vaginal bleeding
- Extreme lightheadedness or fainting
- Shoulder pain

## Causes

A tubal pregnancy — the most common type of ectopic pregnancy — happens when a fertilized egg gets stuck on its way to the uterus, often because the fallopian tube is damaged by inflammation or is misshapen. Hormonal imbalances or abnormal development of the fertilized egg also might play a role.



## Risk factors

Up to an estimated 20 in every 1,000 pregnancies are ectopic. Various factors are associated with ectopic pregnancy, including:

- Previous ectopic pregnancy. If you've had one ectopic pregnancy, you're more likely to have another.
- Inflammation or infection. Inflammation of the fallopian tube (salpingitis) or an infection of the uterus, fallopian tubes or ovaries (pelvic inflammatory disease) increases the risk of ectopic pregnancy. Often, these infections are caused by gonorrhea or chlamydia.
- Fertility issues. Some research suggests an association between difficulties with fertility — as well as use of fertility drugs — and ectopic pregnancy.
- Structural concerns. An ectopic pregnancy is more likely if you have an unusually shaped fallopian tube or the fallopian tube was damaged, possibly during surgery. Even surgery to reconstruct the fallopian tube can increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy.
- Contraceptive choice. Pregnancy when using an intrauterine device (IUD) is rare. If pregnancy occurs, however, it's more likely to be ectopic. The same goes for pregnancy after tubal ligation — a permanent method of birth control commonly known as "having your tubes tied." Although pregnancy after tubal ligation is rare, if it happens, it's more likely to be ectopic.
- Smoking. Cigarette smoking just before you get pregnant can increase the risk of an ectopic pregnancy. And the more you smoke, the greater the risk.

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## **Complications**

When you have an ectopic pregnancy, the stakes are high. Without treatment, a ruptured fallopian tube could lead to life-threatening bleeding.

## **Prevention**

You can't prevent an ectopic pregnancy, but you can decrease certain risk factors. For example, limit your number of sexual partners and use a condom when you have sex to help prevent sexually transmitted infections and reduce the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease. Quitting smoking before you attempt to get pregnant may also reduce your risk.

*By Mayo Clinic Staff*

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## **Did you know that Angel Whispers does not receive long term sustainable funding?**

*We rely heavily on fundraisers, donations, grants and community partnerships to sustain our services to grieving families!*

*We are always looking for opportunities to raise much needed funds for the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program!*

## **Do you have a fundraising idea?**

## **Are you interested in volunteering your time to help plan upcoming fundraisers?**

*We are looking for volunteers to help organize upcoming events!*

**Contact:**

- *Lori-Ann, Program Coordinator @ (780) 998-5595 ext. 225 or*
- *Heather Boonstra, Families First Executive Director @ (780) 998-5595 ext. 223.*

*Thank you for your support!*

## **In Memory of our Newly Discovered Angels**

*Renae Elodie Galvin  
January 10, 2018*

*Gabriel Naslund  
January 22, 2018*

*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 mis-  
spelled your angel's name, please let us know.*

## **In the Wrong Place at the Right Time**

*By Kathy Burmer*

In the wrong place at the right time  
Hoping, praying for such a long time  
for the someday baby who would be mine  
Month after month failing the test  
trying so hard refusing to rest  
But then came a day when the lines became two  
at last my dream was about to come true  
With my hand on my belly I was touching my baby to be  
and looking forward to the day when you I would see  
But then came the pain so sharp and so strong  
I couldn't believe that things could go wrong  
My baby is growing the heartbeat echoes in my heart  
but baby was not where baby should start  
How could this happen, when for so long I had dreamed  
Please don't take my baby I begged and I screamed  
Can you not fix this, can you save the life?  
the pain cuts through me as sharp as a knife  
They tell me that I will die if it is not done  
so instead of two I once again become one  
I will always remember that you wanted to be  
but you had to go because instead they saved me  
I loved you so, and I think of you every day  
my teeny tiny baby who got lost on the way  
In heaven there is angel of mine  
who was in the wrong place at the right time.

# Fund Raising Opportunities

## ***Emily's Legacy Bike Tour***

In memory of Emily's Budziszyn benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program and the Stollery Children's Hospital:

### **Saturday September 15, 2018**

- Start time: 10:00 a.m. (approximately - details to be determined)
- Location: Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreational Area (Waskahegan Staging Area)
- Distance: TBA. Riders will be able to choose between a short loop (perfect for families with kids) and a long loop.
- Start point: Waskahegan Staging Area

Additional Information:

- There will be a registration fee of \$10 per rider to cover insurance, lunch and other expenses.
- Lunch will be provided following the bike ride.

## **Emily's Story**

Emily Budziszyn, was born on September 14, 2013. Shortly after her birth Emily contracted a virus and ended up in the hospital. The virus attacked her heart and resulted in myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). The damage was too great and it became apparent that her heart wouldn't recover. Emily was placed on the heart transplant list and she was lucky enough to receive a new heart a couple months later. Unfortunately, complications arose and she passed away on January 1, 2014 as the result of a heart attack that severely damaged her new heart.



Saturday September 21, 2013 is the day Emily was first admitted to the hospital. Each year on the 3rd Saturday of September we will remember Emily through Emily's Legacy Bike Tour.

Funds are raised in support of the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundations and the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Group.

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# Angel Whispers Announcement!

We are pleased to announce that starting April 1st, Cara Richards has been hired to facilitate our monthly Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Group and our quarterly Healing Hands Workshops.

Cara and her husband Devin lost their son Reid on April 3, 2010 and became a part of our Angel Whispers family a few weeks later. Cara has been very involved with Angel Whispers ever since, as a bereaved parent and volunteer with our program.

Cara is the creative force with Angel Whispers and is responsible for designing most of our Healing Hands activities and Christmas ornaments for our Christmas workshop. Cara is always there with a helping hand or well organized spread sheet for our fundraisers!

Cara and Devin have 2 daughters they hold in their arms - Delia and their Rainbow Cleo and their precious son Reid who they will forever hold in their hearts. Thank you Cara for everything you do to help to provide hope and healing to our grieving families.

***Welcome to our Families First family Cara!***

# Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements

## ***Alaya Dawn Cavner***

*Born on December 31, 2017 weighing 2lbs 4oz and welcomed into the world by loving parents Tiffany and Paul Cavner. Alaya has a few angel siblings watching over her from above, celebrating her much anticipated arrival.*

## ***Liam Owen McClung***

*Born on January 9, 2018 weighing 7lbs 14oz to proud parents Ashleigh and Taylor McClung. Liam is watched over and protected by a few angel siblings.*

## ***Amelia Erika Piwtorak***

*Born on February 13, 2018 weighing 7lbs 15oz to excited parents Christine and Steve Piwtorak and proud big sister Emma. Amelia's big brother Erik is celebrating with the angels.*

## ***Ozzy Louis Sams***

*Born on February 21, 2018 weighing 6lbs 5oz to loving parents Tonya and Quinto Sams and excited big brother John and proud big sister Olive. Ozzy is watched over and protected with the love of his big brother in heaven, Vinny.*

## ***Rocco Ramon Gushta***

*Born on March 9, 2018 weighing 8lbs to proud parents Kira and Mike Gushta, and excited big brothers Dominic and Enzo. Rocco has 4 angel siblings celebrating his safe arrival.*

## ***Reece Andrew Rasmussen***

*Born on March 16, 2018 weighing 6lbs 10oz to exciting parents Pam and Jay Rasmussen and loving big sister Quinn. Reece's big brother Spencer is smiling down from heaven and celebrating Reece's safe arrival.*

## You are invited to join us...

### ***Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program's***

### ***8th Annual Rainbow Baby Reunion***

- **Sunday May 6th, 2018**
- **From 3 to 5 p.m.**
- **Location:**  
FCSS Office  
401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park
- **RSVP: Lori-Ann - [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca) before May 2nd**

*This is an opportunity to celebrate the Rainbow babies that have been born to our Angel Whispers families over the years, while honouring and remembering our precious babies that we hold in our hearts instead of our arms.*

*You are welcome to join us for an afternoon of sharing memories, honouring our Angels and celebrating our Rainbows.*

*Families welcome!*



# Healing Opportunities

## 8th Annual Rainbow Baby Reunion

**Sunday May 6, 2018 3-5 p.m.**

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.

## Understanding your Grief 6 week Workshop

**May 3 - June 7, 2018**

- Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Location: Heartland Primary Care Network, #206 9821-108 St, Fort Saskatchewan
- Limited to 10 participants each session

Topics include:

- dispelling misconceptions about grief
- the uniqueness of your grief
- exploring the feelings of loss
- understanding the needs of mourning
- nurturing yourself
- reaching out for help
- seeking reconciliation not resolution

To register, call (780) 997-0046

## Annual Spring Memorial Service

**Sunday May 27, 2018 - 1 p.m.**

Every spring the funeral homes, hospitals, cemeteries and support groups in the Edmonton area collaborate 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.

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

## 5th Annual Angel Whispers Picnic and Balloon Release

- Information and date to be announced in the summer newsletter.

## Angel Whispers Healing Hearts Retreat

- We are planning an upcoming 1-day retreat, filled with healing opportunities...stay tuned for upcoming details and date to be announced soon!

## Annual Baby Steps Walk to Remember

- More details and dates will be announced in the summer newsletter.

## 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, an Occupational Therapist and Certified Yoga Instructor.
- For more information and upcoming class dates, please visit - [www.yogaforgriefsupport.com](http://www.yogaforgriefsupport.com).

*Continued on page 12*

## **Pilgrims BriarPatch Centre for Grieving Families**

- Expressive Arts for Children ages 5 to 12 years old who have experienced the death of someone they love. We offer art, music, play, puppetry and drama for our youngest mourners to explore their unique grief journey in a safe and compassionate setting. Our parent/guardian group meets concurrently for other family members.
- Expressive Arts for Teens ages 13 to 18 years old who have experienced the death of someone they love. We offer art, music, writing and movement for our youth to explore their unique grief journey in a safe and supportive environment. A parent/guardian group meets concurrently for other family members.



For more information on these children's grief programs, contact Cheryl Salter-Roberts - [cherylsr@pilgrimshospice.com](mailto:cherylsr@pilgrimshospice.com) or 780.413.9801 ext. #302 or 780.413.9801 ext. #302.

## **Upcoming Meetings:**

**Baby Loss Support Group** - Open to any family that has been devastated by the loss of a baby to miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. Sunday's from 6-8pm at Strathcona County FCSS Offices, 401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park. Registration required.

- Sunday, April 8
- Sunday, May 6
- Sunday, June 3

**Miscarriage Support Group** - These meetings are open to any family that have experienced the loss of a baby to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy or blighted ovum. Sunday's from 6-8pm at Families First Offices, 9901-90 St. Fort Saskatchewan. Registration required.

- Sunday, April 15
- Monday, May 14
- Monday, June 11

**Subsequent Pregnancy Support Group** - These meetings are open to any family that is considering the possibility of trying again or for

families that are anxiously expecting after experiencing a previous loss. Sunday's from 3-5pm, contact Lori-Ann for meeting location. Registration required.

- Sunday April 15
- May & June dates TBD

**Healing Hands** - Healing Hands is an afternoon devoted to creative healing. Saturday's from 1-3pm at FCSS offices in Sherwood Park, 401 Festival Lane. Registration required.

- Sunday June 16

**Rainbow Connection** - These get togethers are open to any family that has had a baby born after experiencing a previous loss. They provide an opportunity for families to connect and share their joys and challenges in raising a Rainbow Baby while honoring, remembering and grieving for their angel baby.

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

## **We appreciate our Angel Whispers volunteers!**

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and experiences to helping other bereaved families.

### **Would you like to help?**

We are currently looking for volunteers to help plan and organize upcoming fundraisers.

If you would like to volunteer your time to help Angel Whispers raise much needed funds to sustain supports and services to grieving families, please contact Lori-Ann at (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or email - [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca).

## **Visit us on Facebook!**

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

Find our Angel Whispers Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/angelwhispersbabylosssupport>

Add Angel Whispers Program Coordinator, Lori-Ann, on facebook. You can find her as **Lori-Ann AngelWhispers**.

# Thank You!

A **HUGE** Thank You to the following companies, businesses, agencies, community partners and individuals for their generous support of the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program over the past several years! Your support allows Angel Whispers to continue to provide hope and healing to families devastated by the loss of a baby.

***“Giving is not just about making a donation, it’s about making a difference”***

*~ Kathy Calvin*

To Cheryl and Simon Budziszyn for selecting Angel Whispers and the Stollery Children’s Hospital as beneficiaries of Emily’s Legacy Bike Tour that was held on September 16, 2017 in Canmore/Banff and to everyone who donated and raised money in support of Angel Whispers!

***The 2017 Emily’s Legacy Bike Tour raised a total of \$7004! Of this, \$4282 was raised in support of the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation and \$2722 was raised in support of Angel Whispers!!! Thank you to everyone for your support!***



- To all the families who donate to cover the costs for our care packages, birth certificate keepsakes and memory box program.
- To everyone who has donated online through Canada Helps in memory of the sweet babies of our Angel Whispers families.
- To Strathcona County Family and Community Services for the Social Services Grant we recently received to help Angel Whispers sustain services to grieving families.
- To the Alberta Government for the Community Initiatives Program Grant to help Angel Whispers sustain services to grieving families.
- To the Swiftsure Foundation for the generous donation which allowed the Angel Whispers Program Coordinator the opportunity to complete her Death and Grief Studies Certification!
- To Judy's Safety Company for the generous donation!
- To Tirsa Smale with Pampered Chef for organizing a fundraiser in support of Angel Whispers! For more information on Pampered Chef, visit [www.pamperedchef.biz/tirsa](http://www.pamperedchef.biz/tirsa).
- To Brenda Chmilar and the Kalyna County Quilters for the generous donation of quilts for our Rainbow babies!
- To Strathcona Family and Community Services for allowing us use of their meeting space!
- To Betty Dean for helping with our newsletter!
- To all our Angel Whispers volunteers!
- To AON for selecting Angel Whispers as one of their Charities of Choice for their 2017 AON Cares Charity Campaign. 
- Thank You Hearts of Blue® Hearts of Blue, our employee-run charity, was originally planned as a one-time 50th anniversary event in 1998. It was so well received, however,  that it became an ongoing part of Alberta Blue Cross's community involvement. Today, Hearts of Blue is a registered charity operated by our employees and funded through both employee and corporate donations. Members of Hearts of Blue provide help where needed by volunteering their time and donating items such as food, clothing and furniture to dozens of organizations across the province. Thank you to the Alberta Blue Cross Hearts of Blue Team for the generous donation of Angel Wings and Resources for our care packages!

## Donations

*Angel Whispers 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.*



*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
- birth certificate keepsakes

**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) ,

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- Monday, May 14
- Monday, June 11



**Families First Society**  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

*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)*

9901-90 St. T8L 3T1  
or Box 3285 T8L 2T3  
Fort Saskatchewan, AB  
Parent Link Centre

Phone: 780-998-5595

Fax: 780-998-5503

*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.*

For families seeking additional support please see:

<http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers/support>