

Angel Whispers

SPRING, 2019

*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

#thisisourvillage

Warm Spring Wishes to our Angel Whispers families,

Spring has finally sprung and the longer days and warmth of the sunshine has provided a backdrop of hope for grieving families. The dark and dreariness of the seemingly never ending winter can compound the intensity of grief. Welcome spring and along with it a renewed sense of hope!

Wikipedia defines hope as “an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one’s life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: “expect with confidence” and “to cherish a desire with anticipation.” Living in the present moment of your grief while having hope for a good that is yet to be are not mutually exclusive, you can experience grief and hope simultaneously.

Hope is such a critical piece of the journey through grief, it is hope that can carry you through the darkest of days allowing you to see a dim light at the end of what seems like a dark tunnel of grief.

Hope can illuminate the dark path you walk through grief. Hope can be a beacon of light as the waves of grief come crashing around you.

Hope was at the foundation of our recent fundraiser benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program, the Whispers

of Hope Masquerade Gala. It was a beautiful evening honoring our Angel Whispers families and their precious Angel babies while raising much needed funds to help Angel Whispers sustain supports and programs to grieving families. The theme of the event was a masquerade gala, a very appropriate theme representing the mask that grieving families often feel they wear when in public. In the comfort of their homes, grieving families can authentically mourn for their sweet babies. When around other people, families often pretend to be ok when in fact they feel

broken inside, it is like they put on a mask to hide their true feelings. A common response when asked how they are doing, is “fine”, when in reality they are anything but fine.

There remains a stigma in society surrounding baby loss, it makes people uncomfortable and therefore isn’t openly talked about leaving bereaved families to feel isolated and alone as they grieve the loss of their babies. Angel Whispers connects

grieving families so they need not grieve alone, removing this isolation they feel. Together we aim to break down the stigma surrounding miscarriage, stillbirth, SIDS and neonatal death. Events like our Whispers of Hope Gala brings not only families together,

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but family and friends who support them along with community members, therefore breaking down the stigma so that families feel better supported and understood by those around them.

We extend a HUGE thank you to everyone who supported the Gala. Whether you attended as a guest, volunteered your time, became a sponsor, donated a silent auction or raffle item or made a Wings of Hope Donation you made a difference! A special thank you to our Title Sponsor, ***Straightline Chrysler*** and to the Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee: Heather, Clark, Kyla, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne, Nicola and Angela – the fundraiser was an overwhelming success because of you! More thank you's are included in our newsletter along with information on Angel Whispers and the programs and supports that continue to be offered as a result of the grants, donations, fundraisers and community partnerships. We've also included testimonials from several of our Angel Whispers families of how Angel Whispers has made a difference for them!

Please know that the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program is here to inspire hope and healing and offer you compassion and understanding. We will provide you with ongoing opportunities to honour the memory of your sweet baby and connect you with others that understand. My hope for you is that you have a glimmer of hope in your journey that grows like an ember into a flame. It's not hope alone that will heal your heart, but hope along with the unconditional love and support of family and friends.

Wishing you hope in your heart!
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



"Forever changed by our loss; forever grateful for the safe, relatable, non-judgemental Angel Whispers community created by a devastating common bond."

- Angel Whispers Mom

"I can't say enough about how Angel Whispers has been there for me during one of the most devastating times of my life. If not for them I really don't know how I would have coped."

- Angel Whispers Mom

Angel Whispers accepts donations.

A \$10 donation will sponsor a carepackage for an Angel Whispers family.

Donations can be made through the CanadaHelps website:

www.canadahelps.org

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

*Grief is not neat or predictable
Grief keep us unbalanced
Grief strips us of our innocence and trust in our world
Grief takes our identity, we begin to question who we are without our loved one
Grief makes us feel small and fragile more vulnerable than we were before.
Grief creates fear and longing.
Grief consumes us making it difficult to think about anything else.
Grief is a forever companion.
Grief shows us the very darkest part of life.
Grief also allows us to see the brightest part of life.*

When we are ready and open to it grief allows us to see love, hope and peace in a whole new way.

*We will love more intensely.
Seek hope more earnestly.
Share peace more abundantly.*

We can be more than what Grief tries to make us.

~Tanya Lord~

*Hope gently whispers
To the broken heart that still beats
To the rhythm of love and
Memories
Forever missing
Forever changed*

~Tanya Lord~

*The hope in Grief
It is found day by day
As you realize that
Love Lives Forever
And
Will always Walk
hand in hand
With the Pain*

~Tanya Lord~

The Role Of Support Groups

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

*We need not walk alone...
We reach out to each other with love and
understanding and with hope...
We come together from all walks of life,
from many different circumstances...
We need not walk alone*

Credo, The Compassionate Friends

There is a growing realization among those who care for the bereaved that support groups are an appropriate and effective way to help bereaved people heal. Because they offer a safe place for people to do the work of mourning, support groups encourage members to reconcile their losses and go on to find continued meaning in life and living. Attending a support group facilitated by skilled leaders often brings comfort and understanding beyond many peoples' expectations. Support groups help bereaved people by:

- countering the sense of isolation that many experience in our shame-based, mourning-avoiding culture.
- providing emotional, physical, and spiritual support in a safe, nonjudgmental environment.
- allowing them to explore their many thoughts and feelings about grief in a way that helps them be compassionate with themselves.
- encouraging members to not only receive support and understanding for themselves but also to provide the same to others.
- offering opportunities to learn new ways of approaching problems (e.g. the friend or in-law who lacks an understanding of the need to mourn and pushes you to "return to normal").
- helping them trust their fellow human beings again in what for many in grief feels like an unsafe, uncaring world.
- providing a supportive environment that can reawaken their zest for life.

In short, as group members give and receive help, they feel less helpless and are able to discover continued meaning in life. Feeling understood by others brings down barriers between the bereaved person and the world outside. This process of being understood is central to being compassionate with oneself as a bereaved person. **The more people are compassionate to the bereaved from the outside in, the more the bereaved are capable of being self-compassionate from the inside out.**

Our mourning-avoiding culture often forces bereaved people to withdraw from insensitive friends and family or to adopt ways of avoiding the painful, but necessary work of mourning; support groups, which instead foster the experience of trusting and being trusted, can do wonders in meeting the needs of bereaved people. **In an effective bereavement support group, members can achieve a balance between giving and receiving, between independence and an appropriate, self-sustaining dependence.** The group provides a safe harbor where hurting people can pull in, anchor while the wind still blows them around, and search for safe ground on which to go on living.

Growth means encountering pain

The death of someone loved naturally brings about emotional, physical, and spiritual pain for us as human beings. Forums such as support groups provide us with a safe place where we can embrace our pain in "doses." Encountering the pain of the loss all at once would overwhelm us and leave us defenseless. Sometimes bereaved people need to distract themselves from the pain of the loss, while at other times they need a "safe harbor" to pull into and embrace the depth of the loss.

Growth means change

My experience has taught me that we as human beings are forever changed by the death of someone in our lives. To

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Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, con't.

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"resolve" your own or someone else's grief often denotes a return to a homeostasis (inner balance) that was present prior to the death. I believe this model of care is inadequate and often damaging to bereaved people of all ages.

A "return to inner balance" doesn't reflect how I, or the people who have taught me about their grief journeys, are forever changed by the experience of bereavement. In using the word growth, I acknowledge the changes that mourning brings about.

Growth means a new inner balance with no end points

While the bereaved person may do the work of mourning to recapture in part some sense of inner balance, it is a new inner balance. My hope is that the term growth reflects the active, ongoing process of mourning.

Growth means exploring our assumptions about life

The encounter with grief reawakens us to the importance of utilizing our potentials. The concept of potential in this context could be defined as our capacity to mourn our losses openly and without shame, to be interpersonally effective in our relationships with others, and to continue to discover fulfillment in life, living and loving. Loss often serves as a catalyst to becoming more of what we can be instead of staying exactly what and where we are. Loss seems to educate the potential within. Then, it becomes up to us as human beings to embrace and creatively express this potential. Growth is about not settling for homeostasis, but looking for and seeking out how we are changed by this death. Growth means discovering our gifts, our potentials, and using them to bring meaning to the lives of others.

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 “companioning” 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/>.

Paige

11 years ago Angel Whispers made a difference in my life when I lost my son Phaeton, not only did they print his name in a newsletter that is still ongoing to this day, they also sent me an angel stuffie and a birth certificate acknowledging I had a child who left way too soon. Since that day I have never forgotten the small simple gesture this organization did for me. To this day I always mention Angel Whispers to anyone I know as a worthy choice as they touch the hearts of so many parents who need this support. Up until losing my son I had no idea so many people were in the same boat as myself. The simple things that are done to help us heal really mean the most! So thank you Angel Whispers for all that you continue to do!

In Memory of our Newly Discovered Angels



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

*Jacob Kealoha-Lopez
December 29, 2014*

*Joseph Alika Kealoha-Lopez
November 16, 2017*

*Harper Parnwell Taylor
August 15, 2018*

*Baby Ganton
August 20, 2018*

*Baby Ganton
December 5, 2018*

*Brooklyn De Leo O'Connor
February 20, 2019*

*All angels can be found on our website at
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.

Carol-Anne

Angel Whispers has given me the strength I've needed to face this world without Grace in it. It's been a safe place to grieve and place for my family to come together in honor of our missing piece.

Andrea

When we lost our 9 month old daughter Kamryn no one could relate to us and no one would talk to us about her. It was isolating, lonely and just added insult to injury. Angel Whispers and especially Lori-Ann helped us understand that we weren't alone and helped us to forgive those who abandoned us. Through the group we made new friends who understand us and the heart break.

Sarah

It took me a while to be ready and willing to attend a group meeting as I thought I was fine and had a good handle on everything going on. When I attended it was an eye opening for me and I realized that I really didn't have a handle on my grief. After a few meetings I got my husband to attend with me and I could see the weight lift off of him. This is an amazing group and would recommend the wonderful support team to anyone.

Tonya

Angel Whispers taught me that grief is a life long journey and how important a part mourning plays in healing. Because of their support I have been able to get through the darkest of days knowing that there is light at the end.

In Loving Memory of Jayden Scheie

By: Jayden's Mommy, Nav Scheie

I so dearly miss you because I so dearly ❤️ you.

4 years ago, my world shattered in just a moment.

"Sorry it's a case of Stillbirth" they said.

I didn't know what that meant. All I knew was something was wrong. How wrong? The explanation wasn't what I imagined.... AT ALL.

It was too close to Ryan's birthday...just 5 days away. He was going to be a papa in 5 days and to see your beautiful face and to hold you - on his birthday.

4 years have come and gone, and the pain feels different today. It's deeper, has more depth, it feels processed today. And yet very raw at the same time, its a stronger tug at my heart.

I think I'm grieving harder this year because I know truly what its like to have a living, growing baby.

We ❤️ you Jayden and your little beautiful rainbow sister 🌈 Rose 🌹 is thriving and growing and has pesky little personality.

After you left, I worked with a Trauma counselor Stephanie and she taught me to continue loving you by talking about you. In many healthy ways.

It's so fuc*ing hard but because I love you, I mention you and talk about you wherever I go and new people I meet. It may not be right away but eventually I do. I know it heals parts of me by showing up and sharing and talking about you. Because moms love to brag about their kids and so I do too...about you and about Buggu and about Rose.

I hope you are safe, happy, free of pain...wherever you are. Thank you for coming into our family and making us your parents.

We shall have popcorn today. Like we do whenever we miss you but especially on your day. Then we will light a candle in your name. Hold you and your soul in our hearts and pray that your soul rests in peace. We are gonna skip the cake this year. Your dad and I will buy you a "Happy 4th birthday" balloon this year too and release it into the skies for you.

You would have been 4 today. I have not had the courage to search what 4 year olds are like on Google. I'll skip that part.

Well I better carry on with my day because your sister is up from her morning nap and we will make sure Rose releases the balloon this year... for you.

We ❤️ you so very very much!! Muah ❤️



What does HOPE look like to you?

“Hope is what you discover when you find a group of people who understand, who 'get it'. Hope is what you discover when you realize that the bad days are normal and that every day won't always be a bad day. Hope is what you discover when you find a safe place to share your story and when other people say your baby's name. Hope is what you discover when you are finally able to cry and grieve and fall apart. Hope is what you discover when you put the pieces back together and realize that your new normal is livable and that the only expectations that matter are your own. Hope is being able to look into Aiden's eyes and give him my whole heart and not feel guilty at loving him as much as I do. Hope is finding peace with being Sophie's mom while also being Aiden's mom....”

“Wishing to see that rainbow after the storm...”

“Singing in the midst of a storm. Reminds me of a beautiful poem by Emily Dickenson...”

Hope

By: Emily Dickenson

*Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune--without the words,
And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.
I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.*

“Hope is finding the purpose to live. To discover the new you. Though our hearts and dreams were broken, our lives still have a beautiful meaning.”

“To me 'Hope' was that tiny sniggle inside me that made me feel that despite everything that happened, and kept on happening, it would turn out ok in the end. That what was meant to be, will be, and it will be alright.”

“Hope is discovering that life can still be good after having my heart broken.”

“Hope is knowing that there is someone right next to me that has walked with me in my journey....knowing that I am not alone.”

“Hope is having "confident expectation" - having assurance when the future seems uncertain. Love stems from hope and it also produces joy and peace.”

“HOPE is looking at a full moon on a clear night. It lets me know that the light is on in heaven.”

“Since our son Logan passed away before being born, it has become difficult to define the word "hope". I had many hopes and ideas for the future before things changed. Now it's a word that makes me draw a blank when I'm asked what it means to me. I know I hope that family and friends will want to talk about Logan and memories of my pregnancy with me. I know I hope Logan's father and I keep working hard on our relationship because we love each other and overcoming these events can be difficult for couples to understand each other. And I hope that maybe one day we may decide to have another child and that we might see a little bit of Logan through them.”

Thank you to the Angel Whispers families who shared their definition of HOPE!

Angel Whispers Funding

Did you know that Angel Whispers does not receive contract funding?

We rely heavily on fundraisers, donations, grants and community partnerships to sustain our services to grieving families and 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 hosting a fundraiser for Angel Whispers?**
- **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!

Amanda

Angel whispers showed me unconditional support, when I needed it most. Having this program is the reason I am living today. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart.

heART Paint Café

Join Next Step Continuing Education for heART Paint Café and make a difference for charities in our region. Thirty percent of the registration proceeds are donated to the organization. Create from the heART!



Using acrylics as your medium, enjoy painting in support of Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program, a non-profit charity program operating under the umbrella of Families First Society of Fort Saskatchewan. This program provides caring and confidential support services to families who have experienced the loss of a baby.

May 3, 6:00-9:00 pm
\$39 + \$25 materials

Instructor: Karen Clair
Common Ground Community Café
50 Brentwood Blvd., Sherwood Park

Bring your toonies! There will be a raffle for a great prize at the event.
100% of the proceeds from the raffle goes to the charity.

www.elpscontinuinged.ca | 780.467.7292



heART Paint Café benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

Date: Friday, May 3, 2019

Time: 6:00-9:00pm

Artist/Instructor: Karen Clair

Location: Common Ground Community Café - #150, 161 Festival Way, Sherwood Park

heART Paint Café - In our ongoing commitment to give back to the community, join us for heART Paint Café and make a difference for charities in our region. You will enjoy a fun-filled evening with friends at Common Ground Community Café creating a beautiful painting or craft to take home. Thirty per cent of the registration proceeds from heART Paint events are donated to the organization.

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.

The Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program offers the following programs and supports...

Baby Loss Support Group

We offer monthly Baby Loss Support Group Meetings that connect families to others that have experienced the loss of a baby so they don't feel so isolated and alone as they grieve, they can be supported by others that understand. This group is open to families that have experienced the loss of a baby to late miscarriage, medical termination, stillbirth, neonatal death up to 1 year of age and SIDS. It's important to us that our Angel Whispers dads feel as well supported as the moms and therefore meetings are co-facilitated by a bereaved father so the dads that attend have someone to relate to. Our group meetings provide a safe place for families to share as much or as little as they are comfortable sharing, we honor each individual family's story and recognize each baby. We provide a supportive environment to share where tears are always welcome.

Natasha

My family was there to listen after the passing of our son, only I wasn't ready to talk. Angel Whispers came and spoke in a language that I could relate to and understand to allow me to process; but most importantly I didn't feel alone.

Miscarriage Support Group

We offer monthly Miscarriage Support Group Meetings that give families that have experienced the loss of a baby to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy or blighted ovum an opportunity to connect with others that have experienced similar losses. Miscarriage loss is misunderstood and families are often provided with very little support and are left to grieve in silence. This group gives families an opportunity to be with others that understand and are provided with unconditional support. It's important to us that our Angel Whispers dads feel as well supported as the moms and therefore meetings are co-facilitated by a bereaved father so the dads that attend have someone to relate to. Our group meetings provide a safe place for families to share as much or as little as they are comfortable sharing, we honor each individual family's story and recognize each baby. We provide a supportive environment to share where tears are always welcome.

Understanding your Grief Workshop

Angel Whispers offers an Understanding your Grief Workshop, a series of 6 weekly classes helping you to understand your grief. Topics include:

- Normal emotions of grief
- Myths about grief
- Grief vs. Mourning
- Taking care of yourself
- Reaching out for help
- Healing your broken heart

This curriculum based group is offered a few times/year. Registration is required.

One on One Support

One on One Support is available for families in the capital region, giving bereaved families individualized grief support. Families are provided with a care package and given an opportunity to share their story and receive one on one or couple support. At this time we discuss what supports and services we provide and best determine how Angel Whispers can meet their needs as they grieve. For families that require more intensive support we can provide referrals to other professionals and agencies within the city and surrounding areas. We want to ensure that each family's individual needs are met. For families that live in an area where no other supports are available we can provide email and telephone support.

"Thank you for helping us accept the feelings and chaos that come with grief. Thank you for connecting us with other parents. Thank you for providing us with a safe environment to share our feelings. Thank you for honoring all of the babies who didn't get to live the lives we wanted them to. Thank you for the support that parents like us need. Thank you Angel Whispers".

- Angel Whispers Parent

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Subsequent Pregnancy Support Group

Our subsequent pregnancy meeting is offered for families who are joyfully (yet anxiously) pregnant after previously experiencing the loss of a baby. Becoming pregnant again can be a very stressful time when parents fear they will lose another baby. We offer support from parents who have had a successful pregnancy after experiencing the loss of a baby.

Rainbow Connection

The Rainbow Connection provides families who have had a Rainbow baby an opportunity to stay connected with other families they have met along their journey and share their experiences in parenting a Rainbow baby while honoring and remembering their Angel babies. Grief is a lifelong journey, grief doesn't end when a new baby is born. In fact bringing that new baby home can often cause mixed emotions and bring up many intense feelings as families realize the experiences they missed out on with the baby they lost. Families are encouraged to continue their grief journey amongst other families that understand the struggle between balancing grief with the excitement and joy of raising a rainbow baby. This group is a less formal setting where children are welcome to join their parents and the group meets less often than our regular support group meetings.

Healing Hands

Healing Hands is an afternoon devoted to creative healing. This creative outlet allows for the mourning that is so critically important to be able to heal. It allows us to take the grief we feel inside and convert it into mourning when we express our grief through the arts. We make a special heartfelt keepsake at each workshop in memory of our babies. This workshop is an opportunity to bring bereaved families together in a safe environment where they are encouraged to share with others. These workshops are held quarterly with registration.

"I'd be lost if it was not for the Angel Whispers Program Coordinator taking me under her wings and showing me a gentler side of grief and loss. I wouldn't be where I am without that and I am forever grateful!"

– Angel Whispers Mom

Quarterly Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter is available every spring, summer, winter and fall. Each newsletter edition is focused around a particular topic related to baby loss. Included in the newsletters are family's stories of baby loss, information on how to cope, healing opportunities, upcoming fundraisers and meeting information. Maybe there is a writer inside of you! We are always looking for new story ideas and poetry. If you would like to be put on our email list, or have a story idea, please contact us. You can view past newsletters on our website – www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers

Care Packages

A special care package can be mailed out to families who have experienced a loss. We include previous newsletters, suggestions for coping with baby loss, information on the Angel Whispers program, as well as a special keepsake. If you would like to receive a care package or know someone who would, please contact us with your mailing address. There is no cost for the care packages, however we do appreciate donations as we are a non-funded program and rely on individual donations and fundraisers to sustain our services to grieving families.

Resource Library

Our library includes various resources on baby loss and subsequent pregnancy. Included are videos, books, and pamphlets on baby loss, as well as resources specifically for children/siblings and grandparents. The library can be accessed during meeting times or in the Angel Whispers office. We are always grateful for the donation of resources. If you would like to donate a book in memory of your baby, we will put a special nameplate on the book to memorialize your angel. For more information, please send us an email.

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Birth Certificate Keepsakes

Beautiful birth certificates are available to remember your baby. If you would like to receive a birth certificate keepsake, email the information for the certificate to angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca. Please include the following information:

- baby's name
- parents' names
- date of birth (e.g., August 10, 2009)
- place of birth (home/hospital and city)
- mailing address

Bev

Angel Whispers was my first comfort in knowing I wasn't in this alone. It has been the most comforting, understanding and supportive community that continues to help me through this ongoing journey.

Zoe's Memory Boxes

Angel Whispers is honored to offer Zoe's Memory Boxes. Zoe Reta Mary Steiner was born with angel wings on August 4, 2006. Her parent's Rob and Shelley honored Zoe by creating keepsake boxes in her memory. Zoe's legacy continues on through this program.

"Angel Whispers has been such an amazing experience for me! The love, support and hope that the group were and still are able to provide for me is something I will forever be grateful for!"

- Angel Whispers Mom

Annual Events

Rainbow Baby Reunion
Picnic and Balloon Release
Healing Hearts Grief Retreat

Contact Information

Lori-Ann Huot – Bereavement Coordinator
Office - (780)998-5595 ext.225 Cell – (780)974-7054
Email – angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca
Website - www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers

Angel Whispers Mission

To inspire hope and healing and offer compassion and understanding to families devastated by the loss of a baby.

Vanessa and Simon

Angel Whispers has shown us that we do not need to walk this path alone. We have learned that grief comes in many forms and that we should not be ashamed of our loss but be able to share our story freely with love and courage.

Chantelle

The biggest help has been the different modalities of support. The fact that you can access both groups and 1-1 support is huge. I'm so grateful I had a group of people to support me when I was able to actually come out and honor our baby that had passed. I really appreciate the community events as well, like the vigil at the bridge. I know I haven't necessarily been in person as much as I wanted to, but even just knowing that there is such a loving and kind group of people who understand is comforting in and of itself!



Families First Society
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

The Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society would like to extend a heartfelt thank you the following sponsors, businesses and individuals for their support in helping to make the Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala benefiting our Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program a huge success!

- Angel Sponsor -



- Shooting Star Sponsor -



- Sunrise Sponsor -





Thank You to the following businesses and individuals for donations towards our Gala and silent auction!

*Amanda and Nathan Scott Angie's
Liquor
Betty Dean
Blossoms and Bottoms
Brandi Gruninger –
Evolution Psychology
Brittney Leigh Art
Cameron Dental
Canadian Brewhouse
Cliff Johnstone
Comic Strip
Concrete Blonde
Crossroads
Crystle and Ryan Stadey
Danielle White
Dave Johnson
Dennis Stelmach
DES Engineering
Emily Gushta
Esso
Fort Saskatchewan Acupuncture*

*Funky Petals – Fort Sask
Gold Ocean Studio
Heather and Don Boonstra
Jeanine Gallinger
Jiffy Lube
Jodi Willis
Jude and Judy Oraa
Kanata Inn – Fort Sask
Karen and Brett Matthiessen
Karen and Mike Wychopen
Kim and Blair Heatherington
Kona Heidel
Laser City
Lisa Taylor
Margaret Robinson
Meagan O'Connell
MEGlobal
Michelle Hirsekorn
Motion Industries
Muscle Elements
Nicole Mazulenko*

*Nikki Brown
Paige Smith
Pink Zebra – Kat Schultz
RandM Printing
Rally Subaru
Retriever
Rodan and Fields – Sara Strang
Sage Stone Malas
Sarah Stalzer and Alex Bombino
Shana Schafer
Simply Stunning Hair and Makeup
Smallprint
Staples
Straightline Chrysler
The Pint
Tonya and Quinto Sams
Trendsetting Stables
Tyson Bodnarek
Vallen
WestJet*

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals for donating their time to our Gala!

*Kristina Moir Photography
Daintre Christensen
Myles Fedun
Kelly Thompson
Adam Yachimec
Chancé Snethun
Youth Brigade
Blue Northern Dancers
Jenn Vogl*

Thank you to our Gala planning committee!

Heather, Clark, Kyla, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne, Nicola and Angela

Thank you to the volunteers who helped at the Gala!

Thank you to everyone who made a Wings of Hope donation!


Healing Opportunities



On Friday, May 10, 2019, Park Memorial will host ***Finding Grace in Grief*** --- a full day of practical grief support featuring several fabulous keynote speakers and a choice of breakout sessions. We are proud to share that most of our facilitators are local caregivers and professionals who are bringing new voices and insights to our grief community. Not only do they ‘talk the talk’, but they ‘walk the walk’ each and every day of both their personal and professional lives.

Whether you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you want to help a grieving family member or friend, you are a professional who works with those who are experiencing loss and grief, or you’re a volunteer caregiver --- we hope you will join us for this day of extremely useful and valuable grief support. We know you will find it helpful.

For more information and tickets visit - <https://mailchi.mp/30f8e39e76d5/findinggraceingrief>




Fort Saskatchewan,
Lamont, Gibbons, Redwater

your health. your team.
www.albertaheartlandpcn.com

Understanding Your Grief

Losing a loved one is personal, unique and difficult journey, and one of the hardest life experiences you are ever going to embark on.


When someone you love dies, it can be hard to understand your often complex and overwhelming thoughts and feelings. Taking part in this workshop will help you to understand your grief.



Mondays starting April 29, 2019 for 6 weeks (except May 20)
9:00am - 11:00am

Location: Alberta Heartland PCN,
#206, 9821 108 Street, Fort Saskatchewan, AB

Facilitated by: Lori-Ann Huot, Program Coordinator,
Bereavement Services at Families First Society



Call **780.997.0046** to register for this **free** workshop.

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.

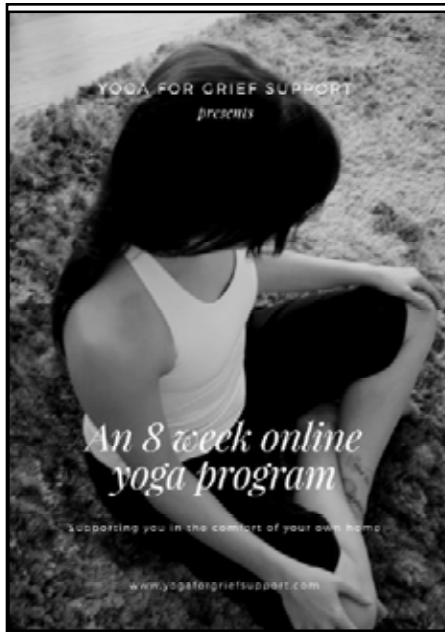
***Expressive Arts for Teens ages 13 to 18 years old who have experienced the death of someone they love.**

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 at

cherylsr@pilgrimshospice.com or 780.413.9801 ext. #302.

Healing Opportunities



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 and online courses, please visit www.yogaforgriefsupport.com

Understanding your Grief 6 week Workshop

Families First, in partnership with the Alberta Heartland Primary Care Network, is offering an 'Understanding Your Grief' 6-week workshop for anyone touched by the loss of a loved one.

Upcoming dates:

- Fridays from 9-11 am
- April 29 - June 10 (no group on May 20)
- Location: Alberta Heartland Primary Care Network, 9821 108 St #206 Fort Saskatchewan
- Limited to 10 participants each session
- Facilitated by Lori-Ann Huot, Program Coordinator - Bereavement Services

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.

Remembering Our Losses

An opportunity to share your stories with others who care

2019 Memorial Service and Reception
Sunday, May 26, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Evergreen Funeral Chapel & Reception Centre
16204 Fort Road, Edmonton, AB
(access off 153 Avenue to Fort Road)
Phone: 780-472-9019

Followed by a Bubble Release

Graveside Service
for the hospital burial participants from 2018
(following the reception)
Northern Lights Cemetery
15203 Campbell Road, Edmonton, AB
Phone: 780-442-0974

If you are unable to attend, but wish for your baby to be acknowledged at the service, or for more information call 780-715-4506 or email pattwalker@ahasa.ca
Hospital Participants: Fort Saskatchewan, Gray Mesa, Leduc, Muscardine, Sherwood Health Centre, Royal Alexandra, Stollery Children's Hospital, Sturgeon, Westline & Westwood

Evergreen Funeral Home & Crematory
By Order Memorial

Sarah

Angel whispers helped me make Elena's memory live on. It gave me an outlet for my grief through craft and helped me honor her memory by giving me lots of ideas in art form. It also have us a safe space to talk about our baby with other who know what it truly feels like. It's just not the same to speak to someone who has no clue what it's like.



Lori Ann has inspired me to talk about my sweet daughter and not worry if it makes others uncomfortable.

Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements

Cohen Ezekiel Lee Kerney

*Born 6 1/2 weeks early on January 12, 2019
weighing 3lbs 8oz*

to loving parents Chantelle and Caleb.

*Cohen's twin siblings, Baby and Ezekiel are
watching over him from heaven,
celebrating his safe arrival.*

Kasey Marion Matthiessen

*Born on February 21, 2019 weighing 8lbs 4oz
to excited parents, Karen and Brett.*

Kasey is watched over with love by her sibling in heaven.

Lucia Marilyn Gushta (Lulu)

*Born on February 27, 2019 weighing 7lbs 4oz
to proud parents Kira and Mike*

*and loving brothers, Dominic, Enzo and Rocco.
Lulu has 4 angels watching over her from above.*

Kinsley Elizabeth Darlene Aplin

*Born on March 22, 2019 weighing 8lbs 7oz
to loving parents Kasha and Aaron*

and excited siblings Kyrah, Avah-Lee and Jace!

*Kinsley has an angel sibling
celebrating her safe arrival.*

Jeanine

Angel Whispers was a soft place to land for me. After I miscarried my first baby, I was so lost and confused. It was a crushing dose of reality. I couldn't make sense of how I felt and was doing my best to come to terms with it, when my brother suggested Angel Whispers. I decided to go on a whim, more out of desperation than anything, and I'm so glad I did. I found a group of people who knew exactly what I was going through. We could talk about the shared grief and experiences, talk about the fear of potentially trying again, and all without judgement or people trying to "fix it" or make me feel better. It's about honouring people wherever they're at in their grief journey and that meant everything to me. Over the course of the last year and one more miscarriage, the group has become another family for me. Not only do we support and show up for each other, but we also laugh together. It's not just about the loss and grief, it's about the healing too. This group helped me through one of the worst years of my life and I'm so grateful.

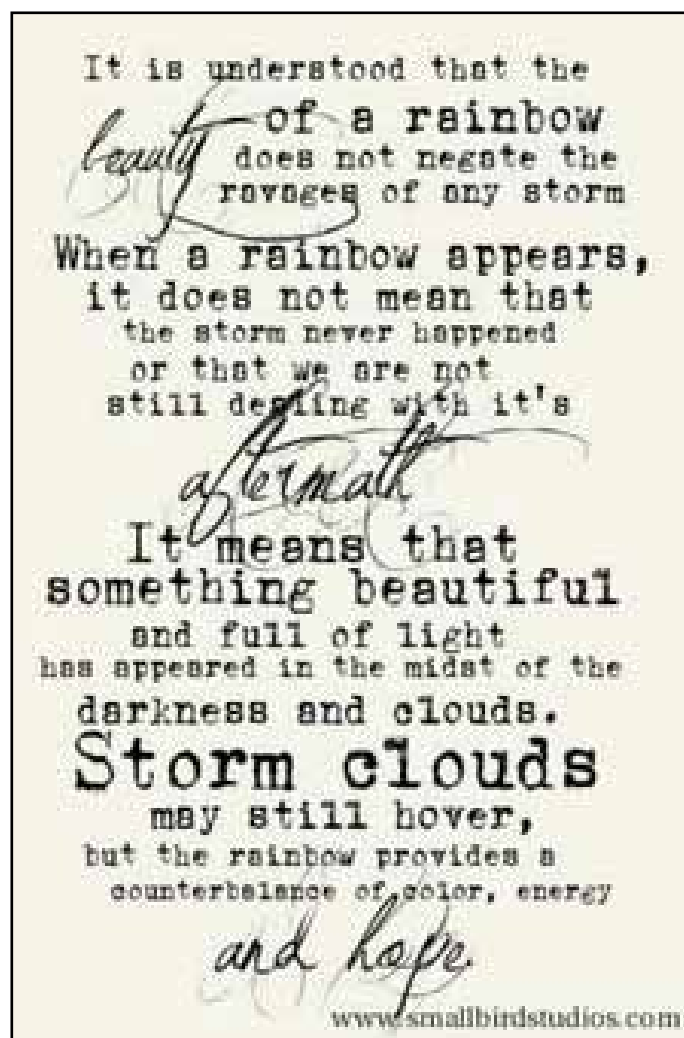
A huge thank you to Tara Needham of 'Happiness is You Photography' who has generously offered free photography sessions to our Angel Whispers families expecting a Rainbow Baby.

A few words from Tara..."My husband and I attended Angel Whispers very shortly after we lost our baby girl, Ella, in July 2004. We have since been blessed with three boys and life is full!

I have started a professional photography business focusing on newborns and families. I have always tried to think of a way to give to grieving families and I have found something that makes my heart sing.

I give free photography sessions to families that are expecting a Rainbow Baby. The session is valued at \$300.00 and the parents are responsible for purchasing whatever photos they want afterwards."

Tara's website is happinesisyoudphotography.com. You can contact Tara at: (780)916-3294 or by email happinesisyoudphotography@gmail.com.



Upcoming Meetings

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

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.

- March 31 (rescheduled from April 7)
- May 5
- June 2
- July 7

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.

- April 14
- May TBA
- June 9
- July 14

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.

- April 14
- May TBA
- June 9
- July 14

Rhonda

Angel Whispers was the place that made me feel like my Son mattered. The personal support and welcoming meetings where what keep me from falling into the dark side.

You are invited to join us... Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program's 9th Annual Rainbow Baby Reunion

- Date: Sunday May 5th, 2019
- Time: 3-5 p.m.
- Location: FCSS Office
- 401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park
- RSVP: Lori-Ann - angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca
- before May 3rd

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 Hands - Healing Hands is an afternoon devoted to creative healing. Registration required.

1-3pm at the Families First Office (9901-90St. Fort Saskatchewan)

- June 15

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. 12:30pm-2:30pm at our Families First Office (9901-90St. Fort Saskatchewan)

- June 25

"Attending the support group meetings every month has been amazing and brought me and my wife closer to together. The pain is still there from our loss but having the group meetings and meeting other families has truly changed our lives. We are so grateful to have Angel Whispers with us on our journey."

- Angel Whispers Dad

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 Strathcona County Family and Community Services, the Mayor of Sherwood Park and council for the 3-year Social Framework Community Grant to help Angel Whispers sustain programs and supports to grieving families.
- To the Alberta Government for the Community Initiatives Program Grant to help Angel Whispers sustain services to grieving families.
- To DOW Canada for the donation towards our Angel Whispers Care Packages and Resource Library!
- To Crystle Stadey for celebrating her birthday with a Facebook fundraiser benefiting Angel Whispers!
- 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 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 Shelley Duffin for generously donating her time to put care packages together and make sympathy and thank you cards for Angel Whispers.
- To Vanessa Patrick for volunteering her time to help organize the Angel Whispers storage room!
- To Betty Dean for helping with our newsletter!
- To Strathcona County’s Fund it Forward for the recent \$500 donation!
- To all our Angel Whispers volunteers!
- To the Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala planning committee: Heather, Clark, Kyla, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne, Nicola and Angela!
- To our Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala Title Sponsor - Straightline Chrysler!
- Thank you to everyone who supported the Gala. Whether you attended as a guest, volunteered your time, became a sponsor, donated a silent auction or raffle item or made a Wings of Hope Donation you made a difference!

Can You Help?

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



Angel Whispers accepts donations.

A \$10 donation will sponsor a carepackage for an Angel Whispers family.

Donations can be made through the CanadaHelps website:

www.canadahelps.org

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

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 Co-ordinator, Lori-Ann, on facebook.

You can find her as
Lori-Ann AngelWhispers.

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



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 ,

Baby Loss Support Group

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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 **6-8 p.m.** at Families First Offices, 9901-90 St. Fort Saskatchewan. Registration required.

- April 14
- May TBA
- June 9
- July 14



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>