

Angel Whispers

FALL, 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

Hello to our Angel Whispers families,

Another season...another newsletter! This edition focuses on a topic that is often very difficult for individuals...vulnerability. And not just vulnerability in life but the importance of experiencing vulnerability when grieving.

Urban dictionary defines vulnerable as “*Someone who is completely and rawly open, unguarded with their heart, mind, and soul.*” This is one of the best definitions I’ve seen of vulnerability in the context of grief. The emotions we experience as a result of the loss of our precious babies are raw and intense. Grief impacts our hearts, our minds and our souls. Grief is the internal response to loss, our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Mourning is the external expression of grief and is necessary to facilitate eventual healing.

Many people struggle with being vulnerable because society often equates vulnerability with weakness, vulnerability on the contrary requires strength, courage and trust that one won’t be judged for their genuine expression of their thoughts, feelings and emotions. The inspirational Brene Brown says that “*Staying vulnerable is a risk we have to take if we want to experience connection.*” Connection helps to lessen the isolation and loneliness we feel when we are grieving.

Mourning requires us to be authentic in our response to our loss. Dr. Alan Wolfelt says “*Authentic mourning is an opportunity to embrace your open heart in ways that allow for and encourage our healing.*” I truly believe that authenticity requires us to be vulnerable, to have the courage to experience our grief in a genuine and organic way.

Society often rushes us through our grief giving mourners “buck up” “keep busy” messages in an attempt to discourage us from sharing our grief with them. The reality is that grief, especially related to the loss of a baby makes others uncomfortable. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by these messages we are at risk of not sharing our grief because we don’t want to burden others. We therefore only grieve and not mourn.

Instead I encourage you to have the courage to be vulnerable in your grief, to be open in sharing your grief with others, to not just grieve but openly mourn without fear of judgement. This authentic response to the loss of your precious baby will help to soften the intense emotions and ultimately will facilitate eventual healing. Healing does not mean you will ever get over the loss of your sweet baby, but instead means that you will be able to integrate your loss while finding ways to honour your baby. Know that it is possible



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to experience paradoxical emotions as you grieve, for example sadness and happiness simultaneously, one emotion doesn't cancel out the other. Give yourself permission that even in the midst of overwhelming sadness we can allow ourselves to experience moments of happiness without guilt. By allowing ourselves to experience genuine emotions we can be vulnerable.

Vulnerability in grief requires us to be authentic in our emotional, mental and spiritual response to loss. For each person those responses will be different as no two people will grieve the same, even when grieving the loss of the same person. For some individuals, their spiritual journeys may provide the most healing and they may find comfort in their faith. Faith is defined as "complete trust or confidence in someone or something." And for many people that faith is in God. One of our Angel Whispers mommas, Shelly Kubbernus shares her story and how her vulnerability and faith have provided her comfort and healing as she has grieved the loss of her precious daughter, Zoe.

Also included in this fall newsletter is an article on Vulnerability and Resilience written by Dr. Alan Wolfelt, my mentor whom I have had the tremendous honour of training with at his Center for Loss in Fort Collins, Colorado.

My hope is that you find some



comfort and reassurance in this newsletter edition as you embrace your vulnerability as you grieve the loss of your much loved, wanted and dreamed for baby. Please know that on your journey you are not alone, there is an entire community of families that have been deeply touched by the loss of a baby that understand, relate and empathize with you.

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



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.

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. 1st Sunday of each month (rescheduled on long weekends or holidays) from 6-8pm at Strathcona County FCSS Offices, 401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park. *Group does not meet in August. Registration required. To register please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

- October 6
- November 3
- December 1

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. 2nd Sunday of each month (rescheduled on long weekends or holidays) from 6-8pm at Families First Offices, 9901-90 St. Fort Saskatchewan. * Group does not meet in August. Registration required. To register please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

- October 20
- November 24
- December 8

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. 2nd Sunday of each month

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Upcoming Meetings.
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(rescheduled on long weekends or holidays) from 3-5pm, contact Lori-Ann for meeting location. * Group does not meet in August. Registration required. To register please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

- October 20
- November 24
- December 8

Healing Hands - Healing Hands is an afternoon devoted to creative healing. Registration required. We will no longer be offering this workshop quarterly due to lack of registrations. We will continue to offer the Christmas Healing Hands Workshop in December and will offer a Healing Hand Workshop as part of our annual fall Grief Retreat.

- December 14

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. Dates scheduled when there is enough interest. If you are interested in attending a Rainbow Connection get-together, please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

Angel Whispers is a non-denominational program.

We honor and respect the individual beliefs of our families.

The Teeter-Totter of Resilience and Vulnerability in Grief

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

“To share your weakness is to make yourself vulnerable; to make yourself vulnerable is to show your strength.”
— Criss Jami

As you journey through your grief, you are probably being buoyed by—and perhaps also dismayed by—your natural resilience. After all, here you are. You may not have thought it possible at first, but you have indeed survived.

The most profound change that you could ever experience has happened, and you’ve picked yourself up, dusted yourself off, and kept putting one foot in front of the other. And you may have felt dismay sometimes at your own resilience, too. The fact that life goes on has probably made you feel distressed or anxious now and then.

Pay attention to those inklings of distress. When it comes to grief, it’s wise to beware of your resilience. Why? Because it may tell you to “suck it up,” “let go,” and put your loss behind you. It may suggest that you need to be strong and in control. Yet what all grievers actually need is to embrace their normal and necessary thoughts and feelings and give them the time and attention they deserve. What they need to do is relinquish control of their grief.

Allowing yourself to be vulnerable is just as important as cultivating resilience. Think of them as the two sides of a teeter-totter. You want the teeter-totter to balance sometimes, yes, but you also want it to go up and down. On some days you will need to open yourself to your naturally painful grief. The vulnerable side of the teeter-totter will tilt down. On other days you will marshal your resilience to help you navigate new challenges and approach life openly as it moves toward you. The resilient side of the teeter-totter will tilt down.

Both vulnerability and resilience are required for you to mourn. Mourning is the work of grief. It is expressing your inner grief outside of yourself. Mourning is talking about your grief and the person who died. It’s crying. It’s participating in a support group. It’s journaling. It’s volunteering and walking alongside other grievers. It’s actively participating in whatever means of expression feel right to you in the moment and suit you best. It is through mourning that you will continue to heal and find renewed meaning in life and living.

Mourning requires you to be vulnerable to your deepest pain and your most challenging thoughts and feelings. It asks you to encounter them fully and express whatever they bring up for you. It asks you not to suppress or deny or distract but instead to immerse. This immersion is necessary, because it is the truth.

But here comes resilience! And resilience asks you to dose yourself with your grief and mourning. It says, “Yes, encounter your necessary grief for a while, then let’s go engage in life for a while. We’ll keep going like that, back and forth, back and forth.”

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The Teeter-Totter.
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It's this back-and-forth of grief, in fact, that provides momentum for the journey. I call it evade-encounter. It's healthy to take part in non-grief-focused activities part of the time (though your loss always lives inside you). It's healthy to evade your grief sometimes. Then it's also healthy, and necessary, to return to encounter your grief sometimes.

Earlier I asked you to picture a teeter-totter representing resilience and vulnerability. Now I want you to imagine one of those old-fashioned handcars that railroad workers used in the 1800s and 1900s to traverse train tracks. Two people would stand on either side of the handcar's small platform, and by taking turns pumping the teeter-totter-like lever back and forth, back and forth, they could quickly convey themselves down the track with their own muscle power.

The handcar metaphor captures the reciprocating power of evade-encounter as well as vulnerability and resilience in grief. When you consciously activate and rely on both as you journey through grief, and you work to keep them in healthy balance, you create divine momentum toward healing. If, however, you neglect one side or the other, you get stuck, and you go nowhere.

The Wikipedia entry on handcars says, *"While depictions on TV and in movies might suggest that being a member of a handcar crew was a joyride, in fact pumping a traditional handcar...could be very hard work."* Likewise, the back-and-forth of resilience and vulnerability in grief is very hard work. Remind yourself that there are no rewards for speed. If your handcar moves at a snail's pace, so be it. If it goes backward sometimes, so be it. As long as it's moving, you're on the right track.

And don't forget to take good care of yourself every day. You won't have the energy to muster the back-and-forth of vulnerability and resilience if you're not getting ample rest, nutrition, hydration, exercise, and health care. You will also need help pumping the handcart sometimes. Healing in grief is not a solo activity. Vulnerability and resilience in grief definitely require seeking out and accepting the support

of friends, family members, neighbors, and others along the way.

I've been a grief counselor for four decades now, and I've been privileged to bear witness to the power and momentum created by vulnerability and resilience hundreds of times. So I wish you vulnerability and resilience both.

Godspeed.

About Dr. Alan Wolfelt
Author, educator, and grief counselor



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.

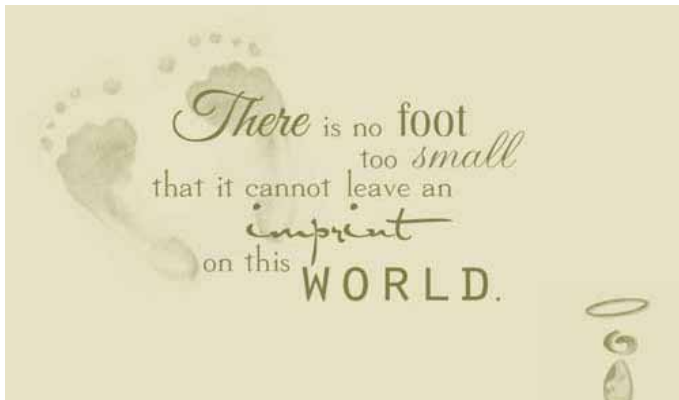
Dr. Wolfelt is a popular media resource who regularly provides his expertise to many top-tier television shows, newspapers, and magazines. Recipient of the Association for Death Education and Counseling's Death Educator Award, Dr. Wolfelt is also a faculty member of the University of Colorado Medical 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, his Centre for Loss, and his extensive Resource Library, visit <http://www.centerforloss.com/>.

In Memory of our Newly Discovered Angels



Baby Murph
November 24, 2017

Loki Wamboldt
September 9, 2018

Adelyn Murphy
October 9, 2018

Ozoemena Nwanegbo
September 27, 2018

Logan Lamar Young
June 14, 2019

Princeton Adonis Gibson
June 6, 2019

Henry John Kelly-Snider
June 17, 2019

Tristen Jacob Brooks
July 23, 2019

Charles and Avery Murphy
September 2, 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.

Walking Through Our Pain!

By Shelly Kubbernus

This is dedicated to my baby girl Zoe, born still on August 4, 2006 at 37 weeks gestation, and also to any parent who has felt the loss of a miscarriage, stillbirth, sids, or any form of early infant loss. I pray that after reading this article, you find some form of comfort, no matter where you are in your journey of loss, and that the pain you are walking through currently lessens with time.

Thirteen years ago, I never imagined that I would ever go through the most gut-wrenching loss you could ever endure. The loss of a child! My child! My unborn child. Some people have said that it's not a big deal! Or why are you so upset? You didn't even know them, you didn't raise them, or even spend any time with them. Exactly! They were my future, my hopes, my dreams, gone just like that.

Any parent who has lost a child at any time during pregnancy, during labor or after birth, knows that having a child is a huge deal! We've lost a future with our child. We've lost any Hope's or dreams that we imagined for our child. We've not only lost them! But we've also lost a huge part of us as well. We are never the same, we struggle to understand all the "Why's" Why me? Why my child? Why did this happen? Why don't people understand me, Why have people walked away? Why are people afraid of me? Why do they look at me like I am contagious? Why won't they say my child's name? Why won't they acknowledge my loss? Why are people uncomfortable when I say her name? Why are people so insensitive? Why doesn't my husband understand me? Why did I have to endure this pain?

Yes! There are so many "Why's" Unfortunately, I can't give you a quick fix answer here. What I can tell you is how I was able to walk through my own, and hopefully something here resonates with you. Whether it's one small part, or the entire article that eases your mind, and brings you some comfort knowing that you are not alone. I am also not here to tell you that grief and loss are a quick fix. Because they are not.

Grief is a cycle that will continue to repeat itself at different stages throughout our mourning. All five stages teach us something different, and allow us to feel all those feelings that we try to bury, whether it knowingly or unknowingly. We don't necessarily follow all five cycles in order, and we may also stay in certain stages longer than

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Walking Through our Pain,

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others, and that's okay. This allows us the time we need to process what we are feeling, and possibly understand it as well.

My first stage after coming home from the hospital wasn't denial. There was no denying what happened! We came home empty handed, no baby, just her diaper bag and a few keepsakes that the nurses so kindly made with us. My first stage of the grief cycle was pure anger, and it was ugly! I went up to our bedroom where Zoe's crib was waiting for her, all of her clothes washed and put away, the room painted for her, a mobile hanging in the crib, a beautiful crib comforter set, toys, books etc....I stood over her crib looking at how prepared we were to bring her home. The anger hit, and I screamed at the top of my lungs "WHY" over and over again. I'm sure everyone in a two block radius heard those screams of "Why".

Rob, my husband at the time and Zoe's father, tried so hard to console me. I was inconsolable. Rob and I were completely blindsided with the devastating news at my routine examination on August 2, 2006. We were expecting to hear, she's doing great! Strong heartbeat as usual, only a few more weeks to go, she's going to be a big baby. You know! The usual at every doctor's visit. Not this time.

On August 2, 2006 little did we know that morning upon awaking that within a few short hours, I would hear the devastating news, there is no heartbeat. We can't find it. We had no idea that our lives would never be the same again. Our family would be changed forever. Rob and I were newly married and had only been married for eight months at the time of Zoe's loss. We went from a newly married to grieving parents in less than a year. How does any newly married couple survive this? We tried, but eventually we didn't. We separated in 2014 after nine years of marriage, and divorced in 2016.

During our marriage, we tried many times to walk through our pain together. We joined Angel Whispers support group after the first month of Zoe's loss. I felt that I needed to be around people who understand what we were going through. I had to let Rob do all the talking the first meeting. I knew I couldn't speak without bawling my eyes out. We attended meetings regularly for a few years, eventually we started painting memory boxes and donating them to Angel Whispers so they could be added to their care packages. We attended any and all remembrance ceremonies out there.

We took Bereavement courses, workshops on how to deal with the holidays we even held our own grieving through the holidays ceremony at the church we were attending. Rob took to writing, including articles for Angel Whispers. He drew sketches of Zoe and dragonflies, because we felt that we a connection between them and Zoe. We tried many things in an attempt to heal ourselves and as a couple. But deep down something was missing! Yes, of course it's Zoe!

She will always be missing a place within our family, even if our family isn't together anymore. What I truly needed was God! Rob and I were both Christian's, but we needed God to be in the center of our marriage and our grief. I hadn't been a Christian for very long at the time of our loss. But Rob had been for many years, and even had a Bachelor's degree in Theology. Maybe even with all of his education and knowing what we should have done, was just too much for him to

deal with. It's easier at times to help others than it is to help ourselves. I don't begrudge Rob for this. We were so deep in our grief that we didn't let God walk with us, we didn't give our grief to him and let him lead and guide us through it. I was in such an infancy stage of my own Christianity at the time. We regularly attended church, and I volunteered when I could. But I literally knew nothing about trusting God to walk us through our pain and loss. Instead of submitting and drawing closer to God, I slowly grew farther and farther away over the years. I still considered myself to be a Christian, and would still

attend church periodically. I prayed less, my faith wavered and was eventually absent. I was often discouraged by everything going on around me.

I was in a deep state of depression that lasted three years. Some days, I never thought I would ever get out of it, let alone feel somewhat normal. The first year was the worst after losing Zoe! Going through all the "First's" of an infant's life is supposed to be memorable! Ours wasn't. The first few months I had no desire to see anyone, or go anywhere, or do much except be far away from the outside world. It was too much to deal with. Seeing pregnant women, or couples with babies was a lot to deal with, tears would fill my eyes, and I would just want to go home and have a good cry. As the holidays approached, I dreaded putting up the Christmas

The grief, the anger, the sadness, the depression, and the longing I had to hold Zoe. To cradle, to hug and kiss her, to sing, to talk, to bathe like we did in the hospital.

So much was bottled up because I didn't know how to deal with it.

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tree and decorating the house. All the things I once loved, became the things I would begin to dread. It was just another reminder that Zoe was not with us. She would never see out Christmas tree, or bake cookies with me. I had to try and do something, so I did. I created a space for Zoe at Christmas. A space that was dedicated to her and it all had to be pink. I found the most perfect little tree for her at a craft sale. It honestly felt like it was meant for her, and it came with a pink bow. Having a space that reflected Zoe was important to me, it made me feel like she was right there. But once Christmas was over, packing up all her decorations until the next year was difficult. It was like saying goodbye all over again. I revamped that space with anything I could find that was a reflection of her. Ornaments, photos, teddy bears, candles etc... This helped me immensely. I still have this area 13 years later, as well as her Christmas tree. I wanted something "tangible".

Once the New year hit, I found myself in need of an outlet. I felt stressed, sad, depressed, and angry. So I joined a gym to help combat all those negative feelings, and also in Hope of losing my baby bump I was still displaying. I still looked pregnant, and had people ask me when I was due. Talk about horror, being asked then try to explain. I wasn't prepared for that. Every few months I weighed and measured myself, but to my dismay! I never lost a pound, and only a few inches, but to me, it was unnoticeable. I still looked the same. Then the meltdown came. Why!! Can't I lose the weight? Why do I still look pregnant? Why?? One word here! Stress!! Lots of it, my body was in a constant state of it from our loss. The grief, the anger, the sadness, the depression, and the longing I had to hold Zoe. To cradle, to hug and kiss her, to sing, to talk, to bathe like we did in the hospital. This was "real" raw emotions. So much was bottled up because I didn't know how to deal with it. I developed what I refer to as a stress belly. Holding onto it wasn't doing me any good. In fact it was causing me even more grief than I could handle. I carried that baby bump around for a very long time. It took me a long time to understand this was a part of the grief process.

Years started to pass and I was still carrying it around. I didn't enjoy this part at all. My body trying to hold onto such a painful experience. Again! Why? Because I am not dealing with my loss. I am just trying to get through it without taking a deep look at it. I wasn't trusting God to make a way. I wasn't allowing him to comfort or strengthen me. Let alone trusting him to do just that. It wasn't until last year that I really began to dig deep and begin to trust God,

and all of his promises to never leave nor forsake me. He was always with me during my grief. He never left my side. I didn't see that then or understand that all I had to do was seek him, cry out to him, and allow him in.

I don't know where you are in your journey, or what your faith is. I can't tell you that being a Christian solves everything, because it doesn't. It's all about a relationship with God and allowing him to walk us through our pain, our grief, our sadness and depression. Psalm 34:18 tells us, the lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. As I look back now, I wish I had trust in the lord to walk with me, walk with Rob and I during that time, but the deep stages of grief had it's stronghold over me, and stayed for three long years before the fog finally lifted, and slowly I started to allow myself to start living once again.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of Zoe! What she would look like, who she would look like, how she would act! Would she be a stubborn child? Or a happy go lucky one? I still have some questions, like what would she be into at her current age. But I know no matter what! She is always with me, in everything I do. Yes, I still have sad times, I still cry over her. But that's when I choose to cry out to God, and remember the teachings in Matthew 5:4 "*Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted*"

That's exactly what God has done for me over this last year. He has comforted me, strengthened me, and lifted me back up when I've felt like giving up. Whenever I've let my thoughts consume me, saying I don't deserve to be happy, that I should stay stuck in my grief, but God has taught me that his grace and mercy are made new each and every day. I started waking up and having a conversation with God and praying before I get out of bed each morning and Thank him for his grace and mercy. If God so willingly shows us this! Why can we not show it to ourselves?

You are not defined by your loss, your depression, your sadness. God loves us unconditionally, no matter what. His love will make us feel whole again. His love saves us, comforts us, leads us, and most importantly, his love will heal us, if we allow it to. Again, I am not saying this is a fix all, cure all solution. It's what I felt the need to share in hopes that it resonates with atleast one person who reads it. In order to walk through our pain. We must feel it, accept it, heal it, look at it, talk about it, don't rush it, don't minimize it, don't stay stuck in it, be alone with it, don't stay stuck in it, learn from it. What is it teaching you, how can you move forward

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and help others? It takes time, be gentle with yourself. Don't let anyone tell you it's wrong or you should move on with your life. You've endured a loss that most people will never understand unless they've gone through it, and that makes you courageous and strong. Psalm 147:3 Reminds us that he heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. A love like that is amazing. Just like yours is for your child.

I would like to end with a prayer for you!

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your unconditional, unfailing love. Thank you for your comfort, strength and peace. Father I pray, that everyone reading this article is comforted by what they have read and feel your love take over. Father I pray that you wrap your arms around, and stay close to each and every grieving parent and every parent who has faced the loss of a child. Provide them with your comfort, love and peace. Remove any depression before it tries to settle in. Father you see each tear, and you hear the cries of their hearts. May each of them feel you near. You know each of their needs. Cover them with your peace and protection. Allow them to know that when they are sad, they just need to seek your face, call out to you, cry out to you. That they are never alone. That you have already gone before them and made a way for them. May they feel their sadness lessen with time. I pray they find comfort in you, knowing that you are a gracious and patient God. I pray that their anxieties and worries lessen and that they can release those burdens that they carry. I pray that you provide them with any understanding that they seek. Father, I also pray that in time they are able to reach out to other grieving parents with words of comfort and strength. In Jesus name I pray. Amen

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!

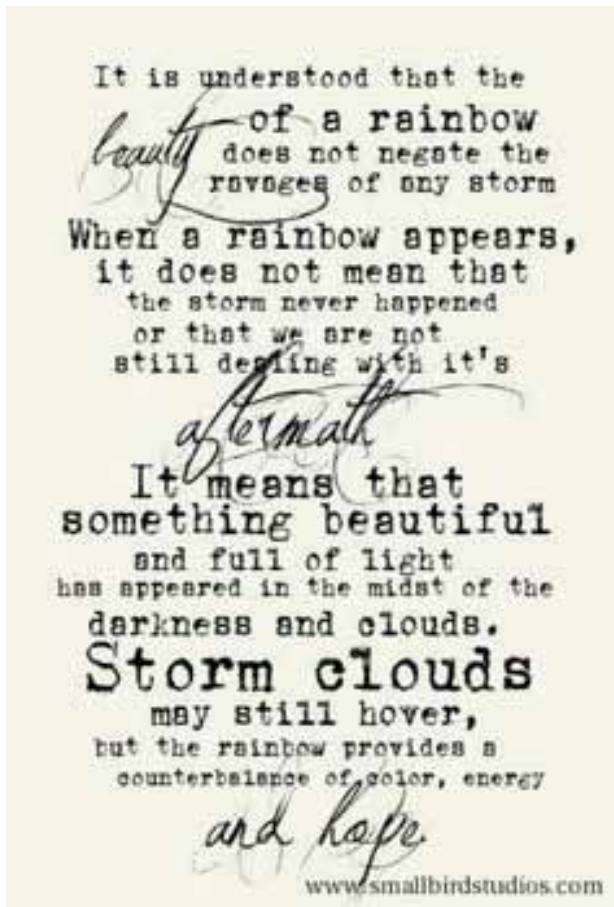
Guide to surviving grief

Cry whenever you need to.
Scream. Shout. Lay on the floor. Sob in the shower. Be still. Run. Walk. Create.
Live your truth. Share without fear.
Listen. Release your pain. Breathe.
Be courageous. Throw away the map.
Wander. Be real. Be compassionate.
Read. Seek friendship. Be vulnerable.
Don't fear being broken.

-Zoe Clark-Coates



Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements



Jude Ryan Johnson

Born on June 25, 2019 weighing 8lbs 8oz to loving parents Kim and Ryan.
Jude's big sister Rosie is celebrating with the angels!

Tenley Ella Loucks

Born on June 25, 2019 weighing 7lbs 9oz to excited parents Angela and Levi and proud big brother Owen.
Tenley is watched over with love by her sibling in heaven.

Leonardo Antonio Hernandez

Born on August 5, 2019 weighing 7lbs 6oz to proud parents Kaila and Pablo.
Leonardo is watched over and protected by his siblings in heaven.

Rook Wambolt

Born on August 13, 2019 weighing 6lbs 11oz to loving parents Aislyn and Stephen, excited big sisters Justyce and Alexia and big brother Link!
Rook's big sister Lyric is watching over him from heaven and celebrating his safe arrival!

Kaden Jay O'Connell

Born on August 20, 2019 weighing 7lbs 9oz to proud parents Meagan and RJ and excited big brothers Noah and Grayson!
Kaden's siblings in heaven are celebrating with the angels.

Kolt Lloyd Philip Scott

Born on August 22, 2019 weighing 7lbs 11oz to excited parents Amanda and Nate.
Kolt's big brother Remy and his grandpa are together in heaven watching over him with love and protection.

Juniper Winterton

Born on September 9, 2019 weighing 7lbs 7oz to loving parents Celene and Billy.
Juniper's angel siblings are watching over her from above.

Callum Douglas McNeil

Born on September 14, 2019 weighing 9lbs 3oz to proud parents Stefanie and Simon and loving big sister Clara.
Callum's big brother Cooper is celebrating with the angels and surrounding Callum with his love!

Odessa Liebe-Lian Malayko

Born on September 25, 2019 weighing 8lbs 2.5oz to excited parents Victoria and Landon.
Odessa is watched over by her sibling in heaven.

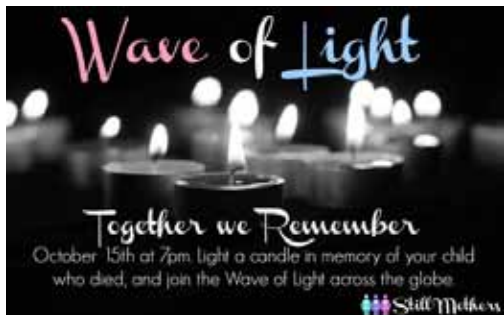
Healing Opportunities

Dr. Alan Wolfelt - Community Grief Seminar

- Date: Monday evening April 20, 2020
- Location: Westin Hotel, 10135 - 100 Street, Edmonton

Park Memorial is proud to be able to bring back this dynamic grief counselor and speaker to help families in their journey through grief.

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day High Level Bridge Lighting



You are invited to join fellow Angel Whispers, HEARTS & ParentCare families to recognize Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day and witness the bridge lighting along with lighting our candles together at 7 p.m. to remember our babies for the Wave of Light.

- Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2019
- Location: Ezio Farone Park, 11004-97 Ave., Edmonton
- Time: Dusk

A note from Cheryl Salter-Roberts with HEARTS...

On Tuesday, October 15th, 2019, we will recognize International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day by gathering together at the High Level Bridge in Edmonton. The City of Edmonton will light the bridge for us at dusk to represent and honor all families who have been touched by the loss of a precious baby during pregnancy or any time after birth. If you would like to join us for this ceremony, we will meet at the Ezio Farone Park, located 11004 97 Avenue. Parking is on the street and there is transit near by. This park overlooks the Edmonton River Valley, with the best view of the bridge. There is a small gazebo that will be our meeting place.

Time to be determined but in the past, we have gathered at dusk. As we get closer to the date, we will send out/post the time. Visit www.babystepswalk.com for more information. We'll have candles for everyone to light. If you're planning to attend, please send us a quick email so we can plan the event based on potential numbers. Our email address is heartsbabyloss@shaw.ca.



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

Understanding your Grief 6 week Workshop

Angel Whispers, 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.



Dates TBA - early 2020

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
- Limited to 10 participants each session

Facilitated by Lori-Ann Huot, Program Coordinator - Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

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



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



Upcoming fundraisers:

heART Paint Café benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

- **Rescheduled Date:** Friday, December 6, 2019
- **Time:** 6:00-9:00pm
- **Location:** Common Ground Community Café - #150, 161 Festival Way, Sherwood Park
- Painting: Glitter Grinch
- Artist/Instructor: Fiona Graham

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 to take home. Thirty per cent of the registration proceeds and 100% of raffle proceeds from heART Paint events are donated to the organization.

Thank you to Next Step Continuing Education for this fundraising opportunity benefiting Angel Whispers!

2nd Annual Whispers of Hope Gala

- **2nd Annual Whispers of Hope Gala**
- **Date:** Saturday, March 14, 2020
- **Time:** TBA
- **Location:** Spark Center, #116 2257 Premier Way, Sherwood Park



We have received approval from our Families First Society's Board of Directors to begin planning our 2nd annual Whispers of Hope Gala benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program!

More details to be announced soon!

All proceeds will benefit the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program! Angel Whispers does not receive contract funding, we therefore rely on fundraisers, donations, grants and community partnerships to sustain supports and programs to grieving families. Your support ensures that Angel Whispers is able to continue to provide hope and healing to families devastated by the loss of a baby.

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*.

Can You Help?

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



Dear Friends;

Our Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program was a huge success! The total amount raised was over \$23,000, every penny of which will make a difference in the lives of families devastated by the loss of a baby.

It is with a grateful heart that we thank you for your donation towards the Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala. By supporting this event you have helped the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program to continue the vital work it does with grieving families and in maintaining the lifeline that it creates for so many.

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

Sincerely,

Heather Boonstra

Lori-Ann Huot

*Executive Director
Families First Society
Program (780)998-5595 ext 223*

*Program Coordinator
Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support
(780)998-5595 ext 225*

heatherb@familiesfirstsociety.ca angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

www.familiesfirstsociety.ca

www.angelwhispers.ca/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 the Sherwood Park United Church for inviting the Angel Whispers Program Coordinator to speak on the programs & supports that Angel Whispers offers and for the generous donation.
- To MOPS (Mother's of Preschoolers) Fort Saskatchewan Alliance Church for the donation of self care gifts for our Angel Whispers families.
- To Sarah Stalzer & Alex Bombino for the generous donation on care baskets for our new Angel Whispers families.
- To Melissa Andrews and Fort Saskatchewan Scotiabank for the recent fundraiser benefiting Angel Whispers in memory of Melissa's son Eric Andrews. The fundraiser raised \$2688.65 which was matched by Scotiabank, raising a total of \$5377.30 to ensure support for grieving families!
- To Sarah Stalzer and Alex Bombino who hosted an incredibly successful fundraiser in partnership with World Financial Group on October 13, 2018 benefiting Angel Whispers. \$4135 was raised at the fundraiser! WFG donated another \$2635 to the fundraiser through their matching grant program. A total of \$6770 was raised from this fundraiser for Angel Whispers to ensure grieving families receive much needed and deserved support! Thank you to everyone who donated and attended the fundraiser!
- 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 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 Betty Dean for helping with our newsletter!
- To Birch and Briar Custom Design for their support of Families First Society's Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program! Birch and Briar held a Mothers and Fathers Day fundraiser for Angel Whispers. Thank you Michelle Poitras, this is such a touching way to honour your sweet angel Griffin. For more information on Birch and Briar or to place an order, visit - <https://www.facebook.com/birchbriardesign>
- To all our Angel Whispers volunteers!
- To the 2019 Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala:
 - planning committee: Heather, Clark, Kyla, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne, Nicola and Angela!
 - our 2019 Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala Title Sponsor - Straightline Chrysler!
 - 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! Over \$20,000 was raised in support of the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program!





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>

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

Open to any family that has been devastated by the loss of a baby to miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. 1st Sunday of each month (rescheduled on long weekends or holidays) from 6-8pm at Strathcona County FCSS Offices, 401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park. *Group does not meet in August. Registration required. To register please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

- October 6
- November 3
- December 1

Miscarriage Support Group

Open to any family that have experienced the loss of a baby to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy or blighted ovum. 2nd Sunday of each month (rescheduled on long weekends or holidays) from 6-8pm at Families First Offices, 9901-90 St. Fort Saskatchewan. *Group does not meet in August. Registration required. To register please contact Lori-Ann @ (780)998-5595 ext. 225 or angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

- October 20
- November 24
- December 8