

Angel Whispers

Winter, 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](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca) or
visit our website at
www.angelwhispers.ca.



Families First Society
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
www.familiesfirstsociety.ca

#thisisourvillage

Warm Winter Wishes to our Angel Whispers families,

As Christmas quickly approaches, a time of year that is incredibly difficult when grieving the loss of a loved one, I am reflecting on the past several years since we lost our precious babies, Loren and Brooklynn. Much has changed throughout the years, we have aged, our daughters we hold in our arms have grown up and are now 16, 18, 20 and 23. My mom has joined Loren and Brooklynn in heaven, we have moved, I have changed careers and have completed my Death and Grief Studies education. But the one thing that hasn't changed and has remained constant is my love for our babies we will forever carry in our hearts and my desire to continue to honour their memory. Loren and Brooklynn's legacy lives on through the work I do with Angel Whispers, providing support to other broken hearted mummies and daddies grieving the loss of their sweet babies.

In speaking to and supporting so many other families throughout the past 17 years, I have met incredible families who honour their babies in such special ways and have created beautiful legacies for their babies. I decided to dedicate this newsletter edition to sharing stories of a few of these legacies. For these babies who didn't get the opportunity to take their first steps and for some who didn't take their first breaths...their short lives left such a significant impact on their families. Their memory lives on in the hearts of their families and those who were touched by their little lives. Their legacy is how their memory lives on...decisions and dedications made by their families to ensure that their short lives had a significant long lasting impact in this world.

Legacies don't always have to be on such a grand scale...legacies can simply be ways you chose to honour your baby's memory. You will find suggestions on ways you can honour your baby at Christmastime or anytime throughout the year in this edition.

May you find comfort in your hearts this holiday season as you remember your precious babies. Please know that you are not alone and that there are others that share and understand your pain and heartache. Feel free to reach out if you are needing support, you can contact us through email: angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca or by phone (780) 998-5595 ext. 225 or through our Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/angelwhispersbabylosssupportprogram/>. You may find also some comfort in the information and past newsletters on our website: www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers.

Wishing you peace, love and hope this holiday season!

With Love and Understanding,

Lori-Ann

Lori-Ann Huot
Program Coordinator - Bereavement Services
Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program
Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society (780)998-559 ext.225
angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca
www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers



Suggestions for Honouring Your Baby at Christmas and throughout the year

A positive way of coping with your loss through the holiday season is to recognize your baby in a very tangible and meaningful way. Listed below are several ways to honour your baby's memory during the holidays and beyond:

1. Hang a special tree ornament with your baby's name on it.
2. Hang a stocking on the mantle and fill it with notes from the family including thoughts and feelings about your baby during the holidays.
3. Create a scrapbook in memory of your baby.
4. Contact us and we will make a special birth certificate in memory of your baby.
5. Purchase a gift for your baby and donate it in his/her memory to your local women's shelter, NICU or your other favourite charity.
6. Attend a special Christmas memorial service for families who are grieving during the holidays—more information is listed on our website and in this newsletter. Many services provide special ornaments memorializing your loved one.
7. Plant an apple tree or flowering shrub in the spring for your yard that will bloom every year.
8. Purchase a yard ornament to place under that tree or shrub.
9. Donate a book to Angel Whispers in memory of your baby, to assist other grieving parents. We will place a name plate in the front of the book as a tribute to your baby.
10. Have a special stepping stone made for your garden in memory of your baby.
11. Buy yourself a special Christmas present available at most gift shops: an angel pin with your baby's birth stone.
12. Make a donation to Angel Whispers or your favourite charity in memory of your baby.

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 Co-ordinator @ (780) 998-5595 ext. 225 or Heather Boonstra, Families First Executive Director @ (780) 998-5595 ext. 223.

Thank you for YOUR support!

Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements

Malcolm and Alex DeVuyst

Twins!

Born on August 21, 2019 to loving parents Danielle and Kellan and proud big brother Nolan.

*Malcolm weighted 7 lbs 1oz and
Alex weighed 6 lbs 3 oz.*

Malcolm and Alex are watched over and protected by their sibling in heaven!

Kye Kalani Wesley-Andrews

Born on October 10, 2019 weighing 9 lbs 14 oz to proud parents Lesley and Matt and excited siblings - Marlie, Scarlett, Faith, Zane, Raine, Tori, Gage and Kasey.

*Kye has 2 angels watching over him from heaven:
Marlie's twin Maya and Faith's twin Hope.*

Jett William Zinnick

Born on October 20, 2019 weighing 6 lbs 9 oz to excited parents Danielle and Scott and loving big brother Marcus.

Jett is surrounded by the love of his big brother Jack, who is celebrating with the angels.

Odessa Liebe-Lian Malayko

Born on September 25, 2019 weighing 8lbs 2.5oz to overjoyed parents, Victoria and Landon.

Odessa's angel sibling is watching over her from above!

The Angel Whispers Rainbow Connection group exists to give families a safe, supportive environment to celebrate their rainbow babies while having opportunities to grieve for their precious babies. This group has changed format through the years from a structured support group to an informal play group. We seem to have challenges in finding the perfect day and time to offer this group in a format that meets the needs of all families. My vision for this group is to see Angel Whispers Rainbow families taking turns planning informal get-togethers in their home on days and times that work for them and inviting other Angel Whispers Rainbow families to join them. The babies and children can play while the parents talk, share and grieve together. If you are interested in being a part of the Rainbow Connection group and would like to plan a get-together in your home, contact Lori-Ann at angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca. We also have a private Rainbow Families Facebook group, if you aren't a member of the group and would like to be, send Lori-Ann a message.

My experience as a mom of a rainbow baby was nothing "rainbow like". It was hard and heartbreaking. I felt an extreme amount of anxiety grieving for my baby Jayden (Stillbirth at full term a few years ago) all over again as my rainbow baby Rose was in my lap. I was grateful for Jayden's sister Rose to be with us but my heart ached for Jayden still.

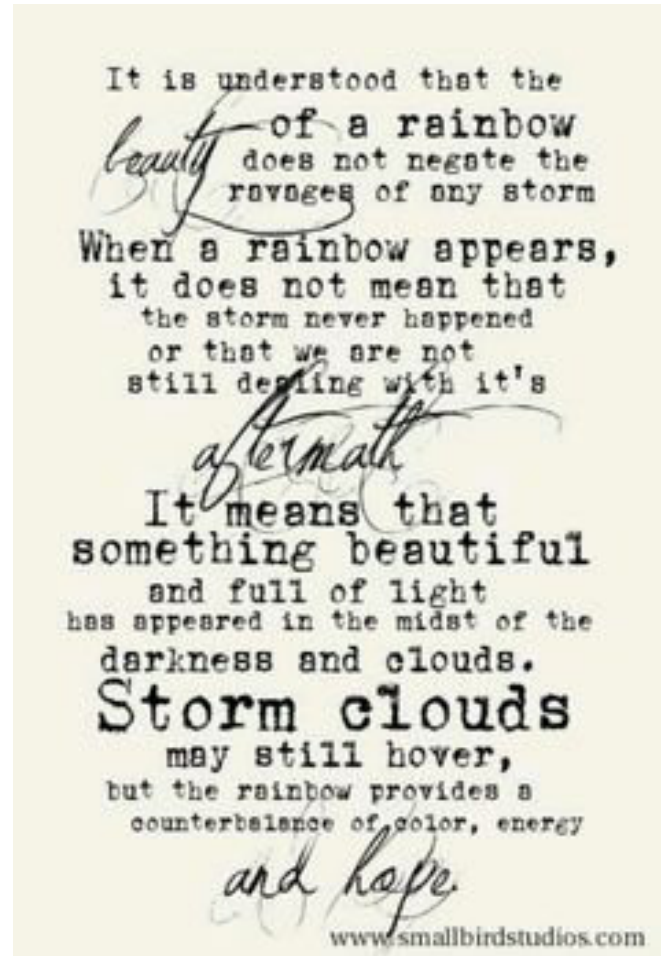
As a rainbow parent, I have found the Angel Whispers group and activities to be life supporting. Talking to other rainbow parents made me feel normal and not crazy (as I had totally convinced myself, cue low sleep and a colic baby and grieving). They make me feel safe with whatever emotions I felt.

The families are honestly the most supportive. They are so humble, gentle, soul soothing. I was depressed and seriously wondered why I couldn't feel happy? Instead of suffering a lot, I approached Lori-Ann and the Facebook

page. I got so much support and encouragement, people messaging me to invite me for a coffee.

I would encourage you to start with one meeting meeting other parents and see what that would do for you. As a rainbow parent, everyone else around me never talked of Jayden or I didn't feel comfortable bringing his name up because they never mention him and they kept assuming that my life was complete now because of my rainbow baby. That made me feel angry and isolated. Learning from others at Angel Whispers having a similar experience made me feel understood and heard and it and a place I could bring "all of me" to the meetings and events. When I'm with my Angel Whispers family, I feel like my Jayden lives on through us, through our conversations, tears and sharing his story.

I don't have that kind of openness in mine or husband's family so coming to meetings and events means so much!!



Continued from pg. 4

Attending the grief retreat is a must attend event for me now and I attended my first one in September 2019 where I got to spend all day intentionally loving my angel Jayden and honour how much I've grown as a mom and as a person. I left the day my heart wide open, full of love for my babies and a proud mom with many friendships with other moms who are walking the same path as me.

I've come a long way in creating space in my heart and have room for loving both babies now, one for my angel Jayden and his little sister Rose. Thanks Angel Whispers, Lori-Ann and volunteers who keep this group alive and continue to support all of us.

Thank you for making us feel safe and supported here.
Xx

By: Nav Scheie



Angel Whispers...a Legacy of Love

By: Lori-Ann Huot

Angel Whispers...2 words defined by love. The unconditional and forever love between a mother and her baby.

The Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program was founded in 2002 by myself and 2 other moms after the loss of our precious babies. Our philosophies for how we felt families deserved to be supported after the loss of a baby were similar based on our own experiences so we came together in memory of our babies and created Angel Whispers. Life has since led Melissa and Cindy onto different paths in life, but I'm committed to carrying on Loren, Brooklynn, Madison and Brett's legacies through the work I do with Angel Whispers, to ensure broken hearted mommies and daddies receive the unconditional love and support they deserve.

Losing a baby is a devastating loss...along with grieving for our precious babies, we grieved the lost hopes and dreams for the future without our babies. Angel Whispers provided us with an opportunity to create a future that included our babies...just in a different way than we had dreamed of. In every aspect of the program, our baby's legacies live on through each life we touch and each family we support.

It brings me comfort to imagine my angel babies, Loren and Brooklynn in heaven making friends with the new little angels and then ensuring that the bereaved parents of those little angels are finding their way to Angel Whispers to receive the support they need as they learn to navigate the complicated and overwhelming grief journey they are facing without their precious babies.

Through my grief journey I have found meaning in my losses...I know that I had to go through the loss of Loren and Brooklynn to redirect me onto this path in life and to help me discover my passion for providing support to grieving families devastated by the loss of their babies. Without my losses, this isn't work I could do. Without understanding grief on a very personal level I couldn't relate to the families and their experiences. Angel Whispers is a gift my 2 babies gave to me and for that I am eternally grateful for the blessings that came from our heartbreak...reinforcing that grief and gratitude can co-exist.

Christmas Wish

Author unknown

*The heart of Christmas is hope
We need hope.
We need Christmas!*

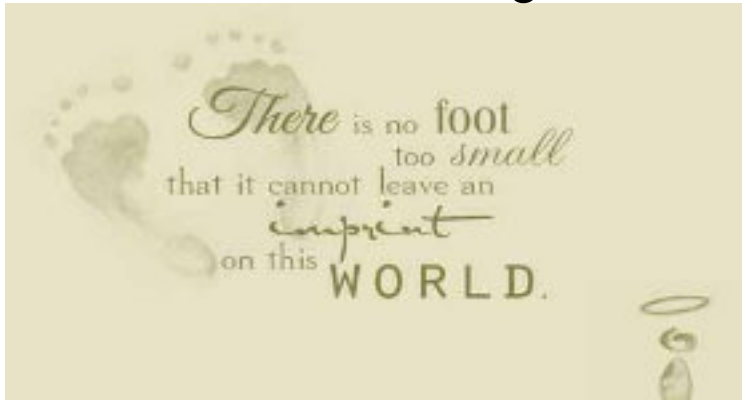
*The New Year gives us time.
We need time to grieve.
But most of all to Heal.*

*I wish you the gift of peace from an aching heart;
I wish you the gift of strength for the day ~
I wish you the gift of recognition,*

*I wish you the gift of remembrance,
I wish you the gift of care,
I wish you the gift of belonging,
These are the gifts I wrap in prayer,
And lovingly send your way.*

*May the memories of this Season
Come on Gentle Wings and
Bring you, your family and friends
Love and Peace.*

In Memory of our Newly Discovered Angels



*Steven Corbett
August 26, 2017*

*Isaiah Ray Haynes
October 10, 2017 - November 18, 2017*

*Baby Hempel
March 2019*

*Emmett Brent LeBlanc
March 9, 2019*

*Thunder and Cloud Homeak
July 26, 2019*

*Ella Rose Hempel
September 4, 2019*

*Asees Grewal
September 5, 2019*

*Milo Yaw Forbes
October 10, 2019*

*Ava Dykstra
October 16, 2019*

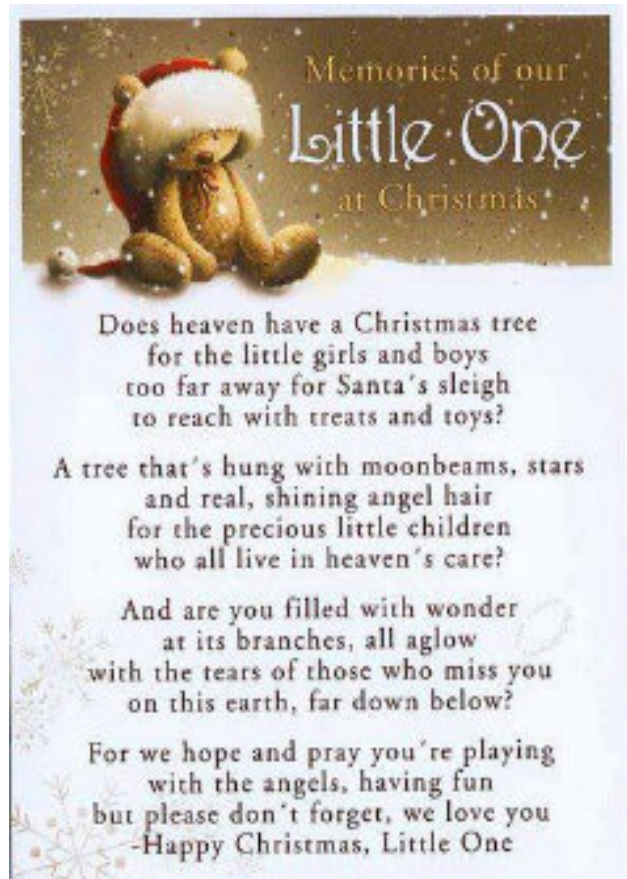
*Baby McGowan
October 26, 2019*

*Grace St-Marseille
November 9, 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.*



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.

Angel Whispers is a non-denominational program.

We honour and respect the individual beliefs of our families.

Emily's Legacy

My husband, Simon, and I welcomed our second daughter, Emily, into this world on September 14, 2013. She was a beautiful, healthy baby girl and was adored by her big sister, Arianna. Within less than a week, Emily was in the NICU with a suspected infection. That weekend is now just a blur in my memories. Within the next two days she had a seizure and was transferred to the Stollery Children's Hospital where her heart later stopped and she was put on ECMO, which pumped and oxygenated her blood for her. For nearly 3 months, Emily fought for her life while waiting for a heart transplant, which she received in time for Christmas that year. However, this new hope was crushed nearly as immediately as it came, as Emily began having difficulties with the new heart. She continued to fight through the Christmas holidays until having a heart attack on New Year's Eve. We chose to remove her from life support in the early morning hours of January 1, 2014.

Emily's passing, after so many months of watching her lay helpless in a hospital bed, was, in one sense, a relief. A relief that it was finally over – the days of waiting and hoping, just to be struck by more bad news, were behind us. However, this led us to a new chapter, which was more difficult than the last, as we grieved the loss our beautiful baby girl. We were left with countless awful memories, many of which were associated with so many holidays (Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas and New Year's). Thanksgiving - the day she was put on the transplant list; Remembrance day – the night we got a phone call, thinking they had a heart, just to be told that we needed to come in immediately due to complications; Christmas Day – the day we got our oldest daughter dressed in PJs to match Emily's so we could get a photo of the two with Santa as he came around that morning, just to find out that Emily was too sick; New Year's Eve – the day we made our third attempt of bringing Emily her stocking with new PJs and a toy, just to find out that she had a heart attack; New Year's Day – the day we said good-bye. The good days, such as those I got to hold her and the day we did family photos, were few and far between.

The months following the worst Christmas season of our lives, were hard, especially as everyone around us seemed to move on with their lives. Friends were lost as they just didn't understand and, although we knew our family and the friends we had left did care and did remember, we felt left behind, stuck in our grief and loss. In our world, it felt like we were the only ones that were thinking about Emily anymore.

In the summer of 2014, with Emily's birthday approaching (in addition to all those holidays), and the fact that everyone around us had seemingly moved on with their lives, I decided that I wanted to create a new reason to remember Emily. That year we did a couple of

things in Emily's honour. We held her a birthday party where family and friends were asked to bring a gift for a 1 year old, which would be donated to the Child Life Program at the Stollery Children's Hospital (toys are given to the children in the hospital, as well as their siblings). No birthday party is complete without a birthday cake...and I love to make cakes, so spending hours creating a cake replica of the teddy bear Emily's grandma and grandpa gave her when she was born was the perfect project to work through my grief. Making Emily a birthday cake is a tradition that I have carried on each year since.

The weekend following Emily's birthday, to correspond with the weekend she was admitted to the hospital, my husband and I held the first annual Emily's Legacy Bike Tour – a 45 km bike ride on the Banff Legacy Trail in support of the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation. For me, organizing this event gave me something to work towards as her birthday approached and it gave me comfort knowing that I was keeping Emily's memory alive, while also giving back to the amazing hospital that did everything possible for our daughter; the hospital that was our second home for 3 ½ months.

Each year in the spring and summer that followed, I spent countless hours organizing Emily's Legacy Bike Tour. Not only did this event raise money for the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation and later Angel Whispers as well, but it also gave my family a day to remember Emily together while spending time with the family and friends that chose to join us on our venture. This year, my husband and I decided that the benefits to our family no longer outweighed the number of hours spent organizing the event and we chose to move on while always keeping those memories of Emily's legacy with us.

This year, as September came and went, the decision felt right.

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.**

Emmett's Effect

It's heartbreaking. Each bereaved family has a story. A story of love, warmth, excitement, earth shattering, soul rupturing. While each story is different, they are important because they are ours. Our story is still relatively fresh but I'd like to share it with you. This is our story, and Emmett's Effect on us.

We'd been told for the past 10 years that we would not be able to get pregnant. If we did, it would have to be through every medical means necessary and even then, the chances would be very slim. Heartbroken, my husband and I created a new path in our lives. We loved to travel, so that's what we would do.

In October 2018, I had been feeling unwell. Not uncommon, but just different this time. I decided to take a pregnancy test one day while my husband was at work. Surely, like the hundreds I've taken before this one, it would be negative. I was beyond shocked to find that it was positive. At 42 years old, after so many doctors told us it would never happen, it did, and naturally. Instantly this baby was loved more than anyone could remotely understand. But our lives will need to change so much, after we'd already created our new paths. But this path was more meaningful. More wanted. More dreamed of.

Our baby was the first grandchild to be on my husband's side of the family, and the fourth on my side, there are three granddaughters. Boy oh boy! How ecstatic were we to find out we were expecting a boy?! Our families were beyond excited and at 15 weeks we could finally share the news with the world!

Being high risk because of my age, I had several appointments every week. The pregnancy was difficult, I was sick ALL the time. But I was pushing through for this absolute miracle my family had been given.

At one of those routine appointments, on February 28, 2019 I was sent for emergency surgery for a cerclage. Our lovely baby boy was coming out too soon. We did everything right. We did everything we could. But on March 9, 2019, at 26 weeks, our son, Emmett Brent LeBlanc, was born. He weighed 1.2 lbs and had the cutest button nose. He had his Daddy's large hands and feet, and the slight little curl of his lips. He was perfect. For one whole hour he was perfect in our arms. But he wasn't ready for the world and he left us peacefully in his Daddy's arms.

The next couple of weeks are a total blur. I can tell you I was a mess and that my parents from Calgary had to come and take care of me. I can tell you that my husband is stronger than he needed to be for me. I can tell you that without my army of real friends I probably wouldn't be here. I can tell you that life isn't fair. But the rest of it, I can't even begin to explain, so I won't.

I needed something though. Even in my grief, I wanted to do something for our community, Emmett's community. I worked with our Ward 4 Councillor, Bill Tonita, the Strathcona County Parks and Recreation Department, along with family and friends that donated money, to install a bench in Clarkdale Meadows Pond Park. The bench is in a beautiful space, close to the famous "Turtle Rock" and has a plaque in memory of our Emmett and all the Angel Babies of our community. We love walking by and seeing members of our community enjoying the bench. I've talked with many people who were resting there, and shared our story. We have an amazing community, with amazing support.

I still needed more. I needed to celebrate more of our son, even though his life was so short, the love we have for him is not. No matter how small a gesture, I said I'd do one act of kindness a month. I started with buying a stranger a coffee. Out of this idea grew #EmmettEffect. We started a group, had decals and cards printed and have been doing acts of kindness as often as we can since June 2019. Our members have done such great things as giving food hampers to families in need, providing meals to the homeless, giving winter jackets to teens in need, handing out doggy treat bags at a dog park, adopted seniors for Christmas, we've even helped find the home of a lost cat we'd found while walking around Emmett's Bench. There are members from all of Canada and the US, even as far away as Australia! We hope that #EmmettEffect takes off and people continue to offer random acts of kindness. I love to say my son's name, having this group allows me to say his name daily and be proud of what we've accomplished through our grief. I hope Emmett's proud too.

Emmett's Mommy and Daddy

Bonnie and Keith LeBlanc

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.

Liam's Legacy

By: Crystle Stadey

As expecting new Parents my Husband and I decorated the nursery, picked baby names and prepared for the arrival of our baby. On August 28th 2017 we drove to the hospital full of excitement to finally meet our little one.

Nothing could have prepared us for the 4 most heartbreaking words spoken that night.

"THERE IS NO HEARTBEAT"

I was in disbelief, confused, as my world suddenly fell apart.

I delivered Liam, so tiny, so beautiful. Liam was stillborn.

I reached out to Angel Whispers for support. I wanted to talk to someone who could understand my grief, and know what I was going through.

At first Lori-Ann provided some one on one support, then I attended the group meetings. The group meetings were a safe place where I could be a grieving mother. It was a place to meet other families who were grieving the loss of a baby. A place we could talk, share, cry and honour them together.

Angel Whispers helped me gain the strength to find a way to honour my son. I am proud to say that this past January the Fort Hospital now has added a Cuddle Cot to their facility.

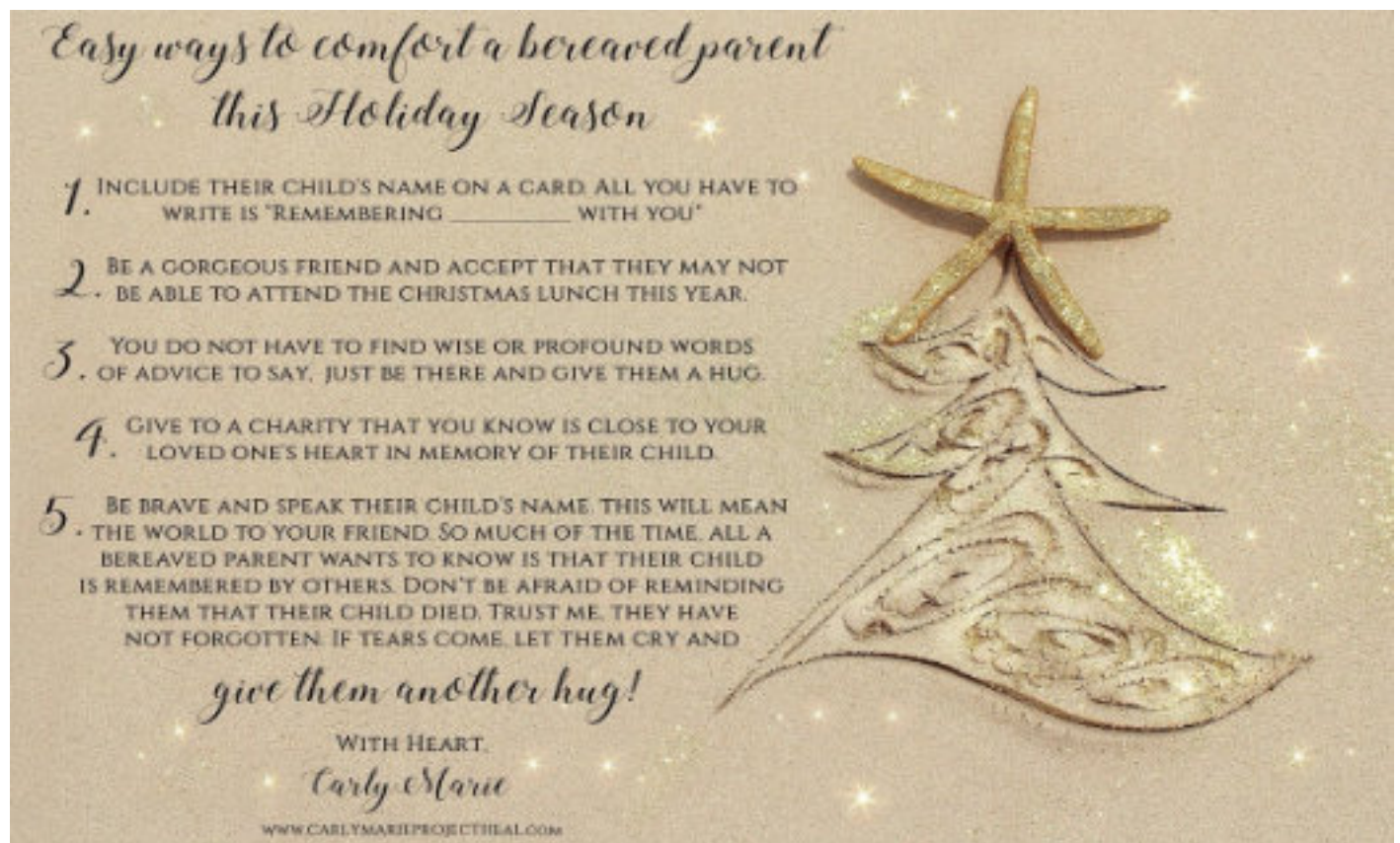
A Cuddle cot is a cooling pad that can be placed in any baby bed. The pad is used to provide more time to the family who is grieving the loss of their baby.

I brought the idea to the attention of the hospital in the spring of 2017 after doing a lot of research on the Cuddle Cot. The hospital applied to the Dow Chemical Community Grant Program to help fund the cost of the cuddle Cot. The cost was around \$4000 and it had to travel from the UK.

When the Cuddle Cot finally arrived, the hospital invited my husband and I to the revealing of the new equipment. The hospital had a plaque donated and placed on the cot for my son that reads:

"In Loving memory of Liam Wesley Stadey".

I hope that this Cuddle Cot will never be used but the sad reality is that it will. I can only hope that the next family who needs it will find comfort knowing when they see this plaque, they are not alone and others have suffered the same loss.



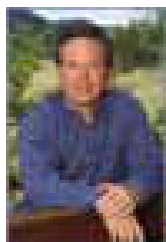
Healing Opportunities

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.

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



Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. Founder and Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, Dr. Wolfelt presents numerous educational workshops each year for hospices, hospitals, schools, universities, funeral homes, community groups, and a variety of other organizations. He also teaches the 4-day trainings described on this website in beautiful Fort Collins, Colorado.

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

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

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

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

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 - Spring 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\

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



Healing Opportunities

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.



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

Pay It Forward Christmas Stocking

I should be watching him open his stocking on Christmas morning. I should have a stocking for Marc filled with baby toys but instead I am asking you to help me fill his stocking with things that will help create a legacy for him.

I am challenging you to please do one random act of kindness for someone between now and Christmas. It can be small, it can be big, just as long as it is something that is kind and as long as while you are doing it you are thinking of our sweet baby Marcus.

Once you have completed your random act of kindness please email me at jenaleajohnson@yahoo.com with a short description of what you did. In the subject line please write DO NOT OPEN RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS or something along those lines. This way I will not read them, instead, I will print them out immediately, fold them up and tuck them away into baby Marc's stocking. Marc and I will open the stocking on Christmas morning and instead of thinking of what we should be doing we will be able to read about all the good things you did in honour of our baby.

<http://thealchemyofgrief.blogspot.ca/2011/12/baby-marcs-stockings-project.html>

A few of our Angel Whispers families have adopted this idea in honour of their precious babies...such a touching way to create a legacy for their angel babies.



2nd Annual

Whispers of Hope Gala



benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

Date: Saturday, March 14, 2020

Time: TBA

Location: Spark Center, #116 2257 Premier Way, Sherwood Park

You are invited to join us for a wonderful evening of entertainment, cocktails, appetizers, raffles, 50/50, silent and live auction!

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.

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

- January 5, 2020
- February 2, 2020
- March 1, 2020

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

- January 12, 2020
- February 9, 2020
- March 8, 2020

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 (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

- January 12, 2020
- February 9, 2020
- March 8, 2020

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

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 Elk Island Public Schools Continuing Education for hosting the recent HeART Paint Cafe benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program - \$225 was raised for Angel Whispers!
- To Cheryl Budziszyn for raising money for Angel Whispers - Cheryl bakes incredible cakes and in lieu of payment requests a \$300 donation to Angel Whispers!
- To Christine Hyslop for the generous donation to Angel Whispers!
- To Kristen Rosato for the generous donation in memory of Baby Bea!
- To Christina and Guy Baines for the generous donation in memory of Nicholas Craig Applin.
- To MOPS (Mother's of Preschoolers) Fort Saskatchewan Alliance Church for the donation of self care gifts for our Angel Whispers families.

Continued on pg. 13



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- Kathy Calvin

- To Sarah Stalzer and Alex Bombino for the generous donation of care baskets for our new Angel Whispers families.
- To Melissa Andrews and Fort Saskatchewan Scotiabank for the 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 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 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!
- To the 2020 Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee: Heather, Clark, Kyla, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne and Angela!
- To our 2019 Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala Title Sponsor - ***Straightline Chrysler!*** ***Straightline*** has also offered to be the Title Sponsor for the 2020 Whispers of Hope Gala! Thank you ***Straightline!***
- 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! 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

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