

# Angel Whispers

Spring, 2020

*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](http://www.angelwhispers.ca).*



**Families First Society**  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

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

#thisisourvillage

## *H*ello Angel Whispers families,

Typically as I write the spring edition of our Angel Whispers newsletter, it comes with a renewed sense of hope for warmth, sunshine and the longer days that accompany spring and summer. Gone are the dark, cold and dreary days of winter. More daylight and warmer temperatures can have a beneficial effect in how we feel providing some light in the midst of the darkness of our grief. Yet here we are as a world struggling with a worldwide pandemic filled with fear, uncertainty and stress.

Stress has a significant impact on our grief, it can make us feel like we've taken several steps backwards on our journey when we've been fighting to take steps forward on our path towards healing. Our capacity to handle stress is minimized when we are grieving. Whether that stress is small, like a vehicle that cuts us off in traffic, or big, like a world pandemic forcing us into self-isolation, we don't have the same threshold for stress and as a result our response to the stress can be magnified or for some individuals can shut them down completely. Grief in itself can feel incredibly isolating when we feel as though others don't understand or can relate to our experience of grief. The self-isolation aspect of this pandemic can further magnify the loneliness of grief resulting in an increase in stress. We may feel as though we are stuck within a vicious cycle of grief and stress, feeling unsure of how to escape this cycle. Reach out and connect, there are many online platforms available to grieving families where you will feel understood and less alone.

Grief in itself comes with intense and overwhelming emotions that can make us feel so different than who we once were. There is stress within normal grief as we struggle to understand and navigate the emotions and experiences that come along with grief. Throw some added stressors on top of that grief and we can be in for an extra bumpy ride.

What is needed at a time of grief and stress is gentleness, understanding, patience and compassionate support from family and friends as we learn how to deal with the overwhelming emotions. We deserve unconditional support from individuals without judgement and deadlines put on our grief. It's also important to acknowledge the gentleness, patience and forgiveness that not only do we need from others but that we also need from ourselves.

Ensure that throughout your grief journey that you allow yourself to express outwardly what you are feeling internally. This is the difference between grief and mourning, grief is the thoughts, feelings and emotions we feel internally, mourning is the external expression to our grief. An authentic expression to our grief allows us to move to a place of healing. Healing will never mean that you are "over" the loss of your precious baby. Grief is the price we pay for love. You'll love your baby for your entire lifetime and therefore you'll grieve for your entire lifetime. With time and support, the grief doesn't feel as sharp and intense and the overwhelming emotions soften.

Now not every stress in life requires the same amount of energy to manage, some stresses are small and have little impact in our lives and others can be huge and debilitating in their impact in our lives. It's important that along the journey of grief and

# The Stress of Grief

By: Lori-Ann Huot

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stress that if you find the emotions too big to handle and too complicated to understand that you reach out for help. A therapist or counselor can help you gain a better understanding of the emotions and help you to learn coping strategies for your grief and stress. As we begin to heal in our grief, if we have grieved and mourned well and allowed ourselves to be authentic in our grief our stress threshold also improves.

This newsletter edition focuses on the stress of grief. Because of the current state of our world with the pandemic we are experiencing, this edition features an article on the pandemic of grief by Dr. Alan Wolfelt. Please know that even though you may feel further isolated throughout this crisis, you are not alone, there are others that understand and are available to provide the support and reassurance you need. I encourage you to connect with Angel Whispers online, our website is [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers). You can also find us on Facebook -

@angelwhispersbabylosssupportprogram or Instagram - @angelwhispersbabylosssupport. Our email is [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca) and we can be reached by phone at (780)998-5595 ext. 225. We've got Angel Whispers families that have volunteered to be "grief buddies" with other bereaved families to help you feel supported that we can connect you with.

Thank you for opening your heart and allowing Angel Whispers to walk alongside you on your grief journey. My hope is that you find comfort in the next few pages knowing that you are not alone and that there are others that care and understand. May the change in season, the longer days and extra sunshine bring light to the darkness you may be feeling right now.

With love and understanding,

*Lori-Ann*

Lori-Ann Huot  
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*You've experienced the devastating loss of someone you love, you have been left broken hearted and overwhelmed with the intense emotions of grief. An experience that most often we are not expecting and are completely unprepared for. We grieve for the loss of our precious babies, we grieve our lost hopes and dreams for the future, we grieve the secondary losses we experience (loss of identity, loss of relationships, loss of security, loss of support systems, loss of income and so many more). We grieve the change that we have been forced into, we grieve our loss of control. We grieve who we used to be, friends and family may be pressuring us to return to our "old" selves. The reality is death changes us, it's impossible for us to return to the person we were before our loss. Instead another change we face is finding our "new" normal which means discovering who we are now.*

*The reality is that "normal" everyday stresses in our lives don't stop because we are grieving. Under normal circumstances we have the ability to cope with everyday stresses with minimal impact in our lives. However these everyday stresses can create significant emotional turmoil for an individual that is grieving. We don't have the same ability to cope with everyday stresses, our stress tolerance is minimized. Often times society places a deadline on our grief, and after a matter of weeks or months we are expected to "be over" our losses, we may be feeling pressured by others to "move on", "get over it", "return to normal". That pressure we may feel can increase our stress.*

*Individuals that are only grieving and not actively mourning are at higher risk of struggling to manage stress. It's helpful to understand the difference between grief and mourning: Grief is the internal response to our loss; our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Mourning is the external expression of our grief, allowing ourselves to share our grief outwardly. We can mourn in many different ways: tears, talking with others about our experience, journaling, creative expression (art or music).*

*We often set high expectations of ourselves and get frustrated with ourselves when we continue to struggle with our grief after weeks or months. We may find ourselves influenced by others expectations of where we "should" be in our grief and take those expectations on as our own. I encourage you to instead, give yourself grace and forgiveness. Give yourself permission to feel*

# The Stress of Grief (con't.)

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*whatever you are intuitively feeling. But I also encourage you to allow for feelings of joy and laughter when appropriate. We can experience paradoxical emotions in the midst of our grief, opposite emotions in the same moment. We can however experience guilt for smiling or laughing when we feel sad because we have been influenced to think that we can only experience happy or sad emotions separately. If we stop setting such high expectations on ourselves it can go a long way to helping us manage our stress.*

*Individuals that are grieving often experience anxiety as a common grief response, added stress only magnifies that anxiety response. Increase stress often equates to an increase in anxiety. Whenever possible it is recommended to minimize stresses that are within your control. One way that can be incredibly helpful to manage anxiety is to focus on gratitude. Much like allowing ourselves to experience paradoxical emotions, grief and gratitude can co-exist. Having gratitude doesn't minimize our grief and we shouldn't allow our grief to cloud the positive things in life we have to be grateful for.*

*Here are some other healthy ways to cope with stress in the midst of grief:*

- *Minimize unnecessary stress in your life*
- *Delegate responsibilities to minimize stress*
- *Set healthy boundaries and give yourself permission to say "no"*
- *Avoid individuals who create stress in your life*
- *Allow yourself to express your grief (the thoughts, feelings and emotions related to your grief)*
- *Find healthy ways to manage anger, guilt, regret, shame or blame*
- *Take a time out*
- *Eat healthy*
- *Get enough rest/sleep*
- *Exercise*
- *Breathe*
- *Yoga or Meditation*
- *Allow yourself to smile and laugh*
- *Journaling (stress journal, grief journal, gratitude journal)*
- *Set realistic expectations of yourself and others*
- *Do one thing each day that brings you joy*
- *Discover a new hobby*
- *Spend time in nature*
- *Spend time with animals*
- *Avoid or minimize use of drugs or alcohol*
- *Focus on one day at a time*
- *Reduce social media influences*
- *Reach out and connect with others*
- *Be willing to ask for and accept support*
- *Celebrate successes along the way and recognize the progress you've made*

*Grief impacts us in 6 different realms: physical, emotional, mental, social, behavioral and spiritual. In each of these realms we experience many different potential responses. Stress can compound our grief responses and make our grief feel much more overwhelming. During this time of stress and the overwhelming emotions of grief take time to slow down, be gentle with yourself, connect with others and allow yourself to feel, explore and express all of the emotions that you are experiencing. Through opening yourself up to this experience and giving yourself permission to grieve, mourn, live and love you have the capacity to integrate your loss and heal your heart.*

# This Pandemic of Grief

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by [Center for Loss](#) | Mar 18, 2020 |  
by [Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.](#)

*The coronavirus is not only causing a viral pandemic—it is giving rise to a pandemic of grief. As I write this, in mid-March, we as a global community are suffering so many losses that I hardly know where to begin.*

*Death and grief go hand-in-hand, of course. Thousands of people have already died of COVID-19 worldwide. Many more are dying right now. These are terrible losses for the loved ones of these precious individuals, and they will need our support and empathy in the months to come.*

*Yet what strikes me at this moment is that this aggressive new virus is threatening every single person on Earth with myriad losses of every kind. Name something you care about or that gives your life meaning. In all likelihood, this attachment is now negatively affected or threatened in some way by the coronavirus.*

*Social distancing is forcing us to be apart from friends and family for weeks and possibly months. Personal events have been postponed or called off, so we are unable to gather for life's most meaningful celebrations and rituals, from baptisms and birthdays to weddings, anniversary parties, and funerals. Public activities and experiences that brought us together have also been cancelled. Workplaces are shuttering or moving to work-from-home. Restaurants, museums, and theaters are closing. Sporting events have been shut down. Town squares stand empty.*

*While thanks to technology we can still stay in constant contact with one another remotely—something that wasn't possible during past prolonged international crises, such as the 1918 flu pandemic—we are learning the limitations of digital love and care.*

*What is grief?*

*As human beings, whenever our attachments are threatened, harmed, or severed, we naturally grieve. Grief is everything we think and feel inside of us when this happens. We experience shock and disbelief. We worry, which is a form of fear. We become sad and possibly lonely. We get angry. We feel guilty or regretful. The sum total of all these and any other thoughts and feelings we are experiencing as a result of the coronavirus pandemic is our grief.*

*Our pandemic grief will change from day to day and week to week. This virus is fast. As it sweeps across continents and we collectively take action to “flatten the curve,” new rules and limitations are popping up every day. Restrictions are mounting and growing increasingly severe. As the noose tightens, our grief will change. And as with the virus itself, it will likely get worse before it gets better.*

*How to help yourself and others: emotionally, socially, and spiritually*  
*There are a couple of important things to understand about your pandemic grief.*

*First, it is normal and natural. It is simply a part of your love and attachment.*

*And second, grief responds to awareness, attention, and expression.*

*You will feel better if you mourn. Mourning is being aware of your grief, giving it the attention it needs and deserves, and expressing it outside of yourself.*

*We have all heard a lot about how to take care of ourselves physically with this virus, but I have seen little about emotional, social, and spiritual health. During this time of great grief, mourning is the key to these pillars of self-care.*

*When we are feeling the emotional pain of our coronavirus grief, we can tune into it and allow it to teach us what we are really worried, sad, angry, etc. about. And then we can express it. We can talk to others about it, in our household, on the phone, or online. We can write about it in a journal. We can listen to music or watch movies that help us access, understand, and share our feelings. Mourning our grief in these ways helps soften it and gives us the emergency emotional release and sustenance we need to survive.*

# This Pandemic of Grief (con't.)

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*Socially, we can't congregate in person right now. Did you know that the word "congregate" comes from the Latin roots com, meaning together, and gregare, meaning to gather in a flock? But we can continue to make efforts to reach out to the people we care about. Video calls are probably the best substitute for face-to-face conversations. Voice calls come second. After that, emails, texting, and social media work too. And don't forget the power of the handwritten letter! The point is to stay connected as much as possible AND to be open and honest in those communications about whatever it is you are feeling or struggling with at the moment. Your candor will encourage others to be honest as well, creating the opportunity for mutual support and kindness.*

*And when it comes to spiritual health, now is an especially resonant time to work on caring for your soul. One redeeming factor of enforced isolation is that it creates the opportunity for spiritual contemplation and practice. In times of loss, we almost always wonder why things happen as they do. We naturally question the meaning of life in general and the meaning of our own life in particular. We turn our attention to our deepest beliefs and values. We talk to God or wonder about God or get angry at God.*

*If you've been struggling with beliefs, values, meaning, and life goals during the pandemic, you're experiencing the spiritual aspect of grief. And the best way to care for your spirit right now is to be intentional about giving it time and attention. I recommend spending at least 15 minutes each day on spiritual practices. Whatever helps you get in touch with your divine spark—do that. For some people that might be meditation or prayer. For others it can be reading a spiritual text, speaking affirmations, attending a religious or spiritual service online, doing yoga, writing in a journal, or spending time observing nature or walking outdoors. Simply being aware of your emotional, social, and spiritual health every day and being deliberate about self-care in those areas will help you and others today as well as in the weeks to come. There is no doubt that this is a challenging moment to be alive, but it is also a moment in which our collective resources have never been greater and more capable. So let's be open, honest, and kind—to ourselves and to each other.*

## **Suggestions for special circumstances**

**Loneliness** — *The longer we are isolated in our homes, the lonelier we are likely to become. Humans are social creatures. We are built for touch and body language and conversation. With the rise of technology and its modern-day substitution for personal contact, we were already suffering from a loneliness epidemic. But the coronavirus social-distancing efforts are making it (and will continue to make it) worse. My best suggestion here is to reach out proactively to others in all the ways that you can right now, as often as you can, for their benefit as well as yours. If you or someone you know is at particular risk for loneliness right now, ask for assistance. Find friends, family members, and neighbors who are willing to create a support team. Most people are happy to help but need suggestions about how.*

**Isolated seniors** — *On a related note, many seniors are particularly isolated right now. As you know, older people are at much higher risk for serious illness and death from the coronavirus and are having to self-isolate the most strictly. If you are an isolated senior reading this, the loneliness self-care tips I offered above apply to you. If you would like to help an isolated senior, brainstorm with others about the ways in which you can still provide safe comfort and support. For example, deliveries of food, books, and personal notes might help. Touching base by phone once or twice a day could make a world of difference. Be creative and practical in your efforts, and most of all, offer frequent and consistent contact.*

*Another special circumstance that applies here concerns seniors being cared for in long-term care facilities that have instituted no-visitors policies during the pandemic. Such policies are absolutely necessary right now, but they are also separating loved ones. And I have already heard of a number of cases in which an elderly resident is actively dying but their family is not allowed to be by their side as they die. This is a great heartbreak indeed, and I can offer no equal substitute for physical proximity at this pivotal moment in a family's life. But I would encourage families to do whatever they can to convey their love. For example, it's possible to write a letter to the person who is dying and ask a care attendant to read it aloud to them. Making a video recording of yourself, as if you were talking directly to the dying person, is another idea. Asking that special music be played and special memorabilia or flowers be placed in the room is a third idea.*

**Far-flung families** — *Many family members are separated from one another at the moment. Some live far apart but wish they could be closer together at this time of need and grief. But travel may not be possible,*

# This Pandemic of Grief (con't.)

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*and for elderly or at-risk family members, physical proximity may be inadvisable anyway. Again, I would suggest being in touch as much as possible, as often as possible, in any way you can. If you are feeling concern or love for someone who is far away, call them and tell them so. Send them a text. Write them an email. Send a heartfelt greeting card with a personal letter. Your grief over a possible threat to their wellbeing, yours, or both is tugging at you, so give it voice. They will feel loved and supported, and you will feel relieved and loved as well.*

**Cancelled events** — *In many ways, special events are the moments in which we most profoundly feel the love we share with our closest others as well as the meaning of life itself. We dream of and plan for significant expected events such as graduations, retirements, and family vacations. And when unexpected significant events arise, such as serious injuries, deaths, and funerals, we drop everything to be there. But we are living in a moment in time in which most such events are being cancelled in an effort to protect the health of the greater community and the most vulnerable among us. Naturally we are bereft over the loss of these rare opportunities to gather with loved ones and immerse ourselves in that which is most meaningful in our lives. Whenever possible, I would advocate for such events being postponed rather than cancelled. If the graduation or retirement date comes and goes, maybe the celebration can still be held later on. If a public funeral can't take place shortly after the death, maybe a memorial service can be scheduled some weeks or months from now. Untimely gatherings are not ideal, of course, but they are much better than no gathering at all. Virtual events may also be a good idea. Baby showers and christenings broadcast live online might be an option, for example. But most of all, what I hope you will do when an upcoming event is cancelled is pay attention to your feelings about the cancellation and then communicate those feelings to the people who form the centerpiece of the event. If a wedding is cancelled, for instance, write heartfelt notes to the bride and groom and any other family members you are close to telling them why you were looking forward to the event, what it means to you, and what your hopes and dreams are for them in the months to come. They will find great comfort and meaning in your words.*

**Serious illness and death** — *If it hasn't already for you, the moment will likely come during this pandemic when someone you care about—maybe not someone in your closest circle but a friend or neighbor—becomes seriously ill and perhaps even dies. I am certainly not trying to borrow trouble, but I also understand that, numerically, you and I may both find ourselves in this unfortunate circumstance at some point in the coming year. Such is the nature of COVID-19. And to complicate matters, it may happen at a time when we are still quarantined to our own homes, and public ceremonies are still forbidden.*

*Virtually all of us are grieving this possibility right now. If you have read this whole article, you know that I am an advocate for being open and honest about our inner grief. If in the coming days your grief includes this worry, please talk about it with other people, on the phone, online, and on social media. And if such a reality comes to pass for you, I hope you will remember that your grief is normal and necessary, and it needs and deserves expression.*

*Here in the American interior west, it feels strange to be rolling onto the onramp of a viral pandemic. We know the route we are heading down, but we don't know exactly how bad it's going to be or how our local communities—or we personally—will be affected along the way. Because of this uncertainty, our grief is in part anticipatory at this point. While we are already grieving very real closures, cancellations, and limitations, we are also, normally and naturally, anticipating the unknown griefs to come. They are also part of our love.*

*I hope that we will emerge from this viral and grief pandemic a more conscious, cohesive, and caring world community. May it shape and transform us into better versions of ourselves.*

## About Dr. Wolfelt

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

*Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “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 & his extensive Resource Library, visit <http://www.centerforloss.com/>*

## 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!**

# A letter from a Grieving Momma

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**Dear Friends and Family,**

*I am writing this letter with the hope that you will understand a little more about what it is like to lose a baby.*

*Some of you may have lost a child yourself, others may know someone who has. And just maybe, some of you have never heard or known anything about loss, until after reading this letter.*

*Wherever you are, know that this is not just my story, but also many others who have had to endure the loss of a pregnancy or multiple pregnancies, grapple with the waves of grief, suffer the weight of empty arms, and even struggle with the endless pain of infertility. These are my experiences within a circle of grieving mothers.*

*I want you to know that I lost my baby and after losing a baby, I lost many other "things."*

*First, I lost my dreams. I had dreams of a beautiful birth with a happy ending. I had dreams of cradling and feeding a newborn. I had dreams of a gathering; a celebration of the life I co-created and birthed.*

*Then, I lost myself. I lost my identity, and for a time, didn't know who I was. I didn't know who I was or what I deserved. I didn't know if I had done something wrong or had karma finally caught up with me. I didn't know what my purpose was or if God no longer loved me.*

*I have also lost my naïveté, or my innocence. I now know that at any moment, I could lose again. I now know that nothing is ever promised. I now know the pain of loss; the pain I now live with every single day of my "new" life. I have seen and lost so much, and yet, I am filled with wisdom that I did not want. I am no longer and will never be the woman I was before.*

*I will never know my baby's eyes or my baby's voice. I will never see the seasons of growth and a fruitful life. I will never know and don't know, and that is the most painful thing of all. My baby is a mystery that I could never solve.*

*Losing a baby is backwards; parents are not supposed to outlive their children. And giving birth to death doesn't make any sense, but it is real and I am living proof.*

*So, do not be alarmed if I am not present: to your baby showers, the birth of your babies, to your baby's first, second, third, even fifth, sixth, or seventh birthdays.*

*Do not be curt or offended if I do not shout with happiness, "Congratulations!" during your announcement or hold your babies.*

*Do not misunderstand me when I say that it is not because I am not happy for you, but that I am sad for me. I often feel that what happened to me and my baby is unjust. I often struggle with feelings of jealousy and envy, blame and shame.*

*Forgive me if I am not compassionate of your complaints of pregnancy and motherhood.*

*And despite how hard I try not to, I will always feel the hurt and the pangs of pain when I am watching my dreams unfold for someone else, and not myself. I ask, "Well, why not me??"*

*I ask that you hold space, not just for me, but also my baby. Remember me and my baby on Mother's Day and every other family holiday. Remember me and my baby, while you are holding and hugging tightly onto your baby. Remember me and my baby on your baby showers, the births of your babies, and your baby's first, second, third, and forever more birthdays.*

*I ask that you know that our world celebrates life more than it acknowledges death. I ask that you know that when a baby dies, it changes the meaning of life. I ask that you know and remember and say my baby's name.*



## Megan's Letter (con't.)

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*Please say his name for the silence of his cries. Please say his name to give him a voice because I am tired of doing it alone. I am exhausted and my heart is incomplete, constantly shattering in hope and doubt.*

*When I am distant, please show me that you care. When I am present, please give me a hug and tell me that you are there. It is not that I isolate myself from you, but that I feel life has isolated me: from joy, from peace, from rest. All I know is that I must survive this new life of sorrow, and even so, it is painful to watch life pass me by without the one person who should be here.*

*There is no cure for grief and I do not want to be cured. I just want to be loved as a friend, as family, and as a mother.*

Megan

*In loving memory of baby Ava*

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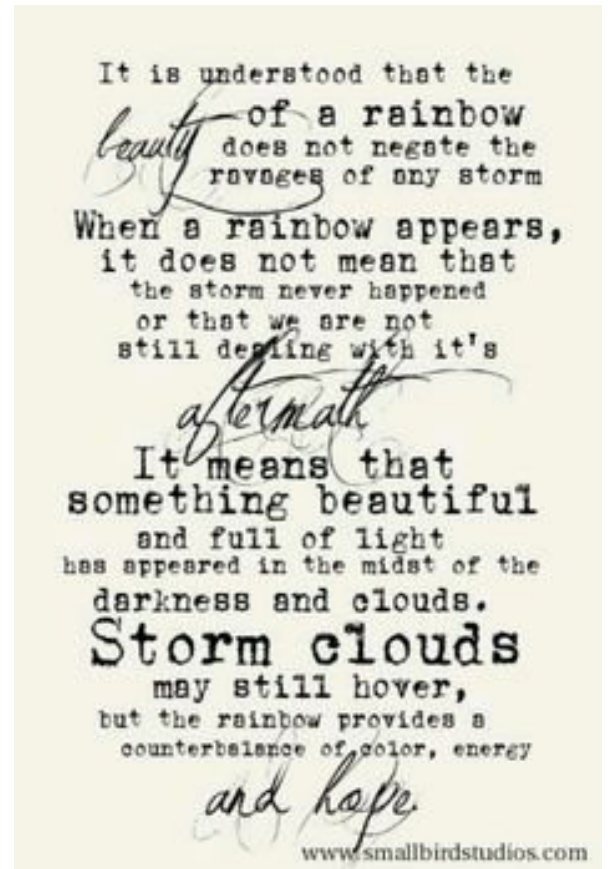
## Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements

*Elken Xavier Disnard*

*Born on February 13, 2020 weighing 9 lbs 13 oz  
to excited parents Catherine and Justin  
and loving big sister Adelaide.*

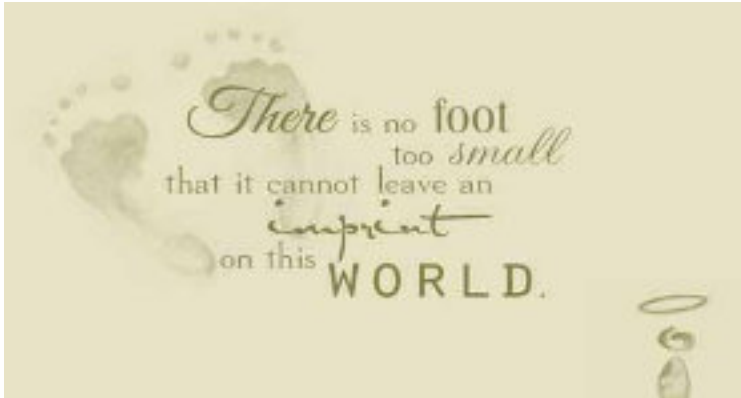
*Elken has an angel sibling watching over him from above.*

*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 & 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 & times that work for them and inviting other Angel Whispers Rainbow families to join them. The babies & children can play while the parents talk, share & 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](mailto: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.*



# In Memory of our Newly Discovered Angels

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

Please call or email us if you would like to submit  
your baby's name to be remembered.

If we have forgotten to remember your baby on this  
page, or have misspelled your angel's name, please  
let us know.

*Baby Boisvert - January 2020*

*Peanut Flowers - January 4, 2020*

*'Chocolate Chip' Dyck - January 8, 2020*

*Hugo Almaden - January 30, 2020*

*Baby Vorotilenko - February 2019*

*Graham Tyrkalo - February 14, 2020*

*LW (Little Warrior) Almaden - March 2019*

*Peanut Hempel - March 6, 2020*

*Athena Hunt - March 29, 2019*

*Baby Vorotilenko - April 2019*

*BAM (Baby Angel) McKnight - April 11, 2017*

*Baby Boisvert - May 2019*

*Baby Dyck - May 27, 2019*

*Christopher Evan Horner - July 5, 2019*

*Baby Vorotilenko - August 2019*

*Baby Dyck - September 24, 2019*

*Ares Starrett - November 16, 2018 - November 23, 2019*

*Angel Sampson - December 2019*

*Baby Vorotilenko - December 2019*

*Baby Dyck - December 15, 2019*

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

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

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

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

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

# Sometimes I See My Child

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*Sometimes I see my child  
And cry endless tears  
Of a life never lived  
Of a breath never taken  
Of a voice never heard*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And scream with rage and anger  
Of a potential never realized  
Of a beauty never painted  
Of a lullaby never sung*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And feel a vast emptiness  
Of a face never gazed upon  
Of a hand that never grasped  
Of a cry never comforted*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And realize*

*That I will always be her mother  
She will always be my child  
And this realization is greater  
Than any truth I have ever known  
And I will hide this truth within my heart  
And keep it closer to me  
Than any pain I could harbor  
Any hate I could hold  
Any anguish I could have*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And I understand  
That after life here is over  
That my child will still be my child  
  
And on one glorious day as I will step into  
Heaven*

*I will see my child, really see my child  
For the first time*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And I know  
That all my dream for my child  
Have not gone unnoticed  
That all my love for this child  
Has not ended  
But that God, who is the master author  
Has written on this child's soul  
A story more beautiful than I  
Could have ever imagined*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And I smile  
I smile because despite my grief  
And all of my unanswered prayers  
I feel privileged  
I feel privileged because I was part of a miracle  
  
Even though this miracle seemed too short on  
earth  
I will have an eternity with God to embrace it.*

*Sometimes I see my child  
And I have peace*

*Written by Jennifer Lewin (February 2006)*

*In Loving Memory of Aspen*

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*Angel Whispers is a non-denominational  
program.*

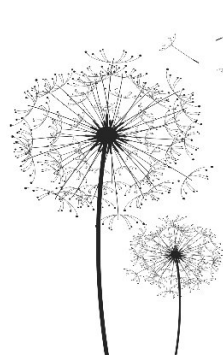
*We honour and respect the individual beliefs of  
our families.*

# Healing Opportunities



## Understanding Your Grief Workshop

This is a series of 6 weekly classes to help 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*

**When:** Thursdays - April 23 to May 28

**Where:** Families First Society  
9901 – 90 Street, Fort Sask

**Time:** 6:00 - 8:00 pm

\*Limited to 10 participants

For more information or to **REGISTER** please call 780-998-5595 ext. 225.



# Healing Opportunities

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## Understanding your Grief 6 week Workshop

- *Dates: Thursday's - April 23-May 28, 2020 (Dates may change dependent on Covid-19 pandemic situation)*
- *Time: 6-8pm*
- *Location: Families First Society, 9901-90 St. 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*

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## 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](mailto:cherylsr@pilgrimshospice.com) or 780.413.9801 ext. #302.*



# Healing Opportunities

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## Dr. Alan Wolfelt - Community Grief Seminar

- *Date: To be rescheduled due to Covid-19 pandemic (previously scheduled for 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.*

*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/>.*

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## 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](http://www.yogaforgriefsupport.com)*



# Jayden's Anniversary

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*March 21, 2020 is Jayden's 5 year anniversary. He would have been 5 years old this year.*

*Today I wanted to honour him. I honor him daily, privately. But today for his anniversary, I want to share how my relationship with him has transformed over the years. And how I have grown to be the mother I am today. I think its important to share with you because I needed to hear it from someone when I felt I was in trenches of deep suffering, wondering what just happened and how am I ever to survive this?!*

*I want to honor how sacred my relationship has become to Jayden. We connect daily, through a ritual. I could have never imagined connecting and loving him daily, in the wildest of my dreams. Spent years suffering praying for him to come back, trying to piece my broken heart together only to feel the ache grow with time. Through therapy, and Angel Whispers friendships and community retreats, and more grief groups, I have come to "move with grief" with love and a renewed understanding rather than in pain and suffering. I have found peace in connecting with my angel baby instead of trying to forget him. I connect with Jayden daily by coloring butterflies on my Happy Color app. I have colored about 500 paintings, 100 for each year for him and I think of what I want to tell him, my guardian angel. Then a 2nd ritual is to write to him via a personal blog. Because of my daily loving relationship with him, I now am looking forward to celebrating him on his anniversaries.*

*Second reason is to honor his mother, how this journey over the last 5 years has transformed her. I look at my picture when I was pregnant with Jayden and I don't recognize her. I see myself today and I see a version of myself that I am content with. Loosing Jayden costed me friendships, my career, my ambitions, who I was. I tried to hold onto the "Old Nav" but it's like holding onto sand...its simply not possible. Nav today is steady, slow to act, thinks more, really really values relationships, strongly connected to God, calm, wise, mature, able to hold space for others without the need to fix. She is in love with both of her kids Rose and angel baby Jayden and her dog. She talks about Jayden freely without worrying about anyone else. She's beautiful, one warrior women, courageous, vulnerable and loving. I'm so effin' proud of her.*

*All of Jayden anniversaries in the past have haunted me. The date hung over me like a wall of bricks ready to fall. I wished I could escape his anniversary day. So the anniversary has always sucked. I tried to do various things to honor him (like releasing a balloon with a prayer and cutting a cake 1 year for him), only to do those things and slip into depression for days and weeks that followed.*

*This year, I looked forward to the date of his anniversary. I'm excited to celebrate his day. I feel this renewed hope to make the day as celebratory as possible in the next years to come.*

*There's hope. Things will get better for you too. I hope my journey gives you hope and courage to create your own rituals with your angel babies.*

*With love and butterflies,*

*Nav - Jayden's mom*

## Upcoming Meetings

*Because of the current Covid-19 pandemic, our in person support group meetings are suspended until further notice. Contact Lori-Ann at(780)974-7054 for more information on virtual support group meetings.*



# Thank You!

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*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 Andrews family for the fundraiser benefiting Angel Whispers in memory of Eric Andrews.*
- 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 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 the Sheeptown Players Society for the \$300 donation to the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program from their Halloween Walk.*
- 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 Kalya 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 2020 Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee: Heather, Clark, Kyla, Alana, Meagan, Crystle, Carol-Anne and Angela!*
- To our 2020 Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala Title Sponsor - Straightline Chrysler! Thank you Straightline!*
- To everyone who supported the 2019 Whispers of Hope 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!*





- Thank you to everyone who has donated towards the 2020 Whispers of Hope Gala originally planned for March 14, 2020. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Gala has been postponed, your donation will instead be used towards our rescheduled Gala that we hope to plan in the near future!

## Funding Opportunities

*In light of the ongoing and continuously evolving Covid-19 situation, and because the health and safety of our Angel Whispers families, supporters and volunteers is of utmost importance to us the Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee has made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone the 2nd Annual Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala originally scheduled for March 14, 2020.*

*A new date will be set once we have a bit more certainty of the future of this pandemic. Those that have purchased tickets can choose to apply those tickets to the new date or request a refund. Alternately, if you have purchased a ticket and would rather donate the cost of those tickets to the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program, you can receive a tax receipt for your donation. If you would like to request a refund, please contact Lori-Ann Huot, Program Coordinator at [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca)*

*We would like to thank you for your patience and for your understanding of our decision to postpone the Gala! Thank you for your ongoing support! We look forward to setting a new date soon and will be communicating with everyone once that new date has been set!*

*The Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee.*

# Angel Whispers



*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 Care Packages

*Angel Whispers* sends out care packages to grieving families. Each package includes a special memento and strategies for coping. Birth Certificate keepsakes are also available. If you would like to receive or send a care package, please call us or email [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca).

### 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



**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

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

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

For families seeking additional support please see:

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

*To receive our newsletter or a special care package, please call 780.998.5595, ext. 225.*

## Baby Loss Support Group and Miscarriage Support Group:

*Because of the current Covid-19 pandemic, our in person support group meetings are suspended until further notice. Contact Lori-Ann at(780)974-7054 for more information on virtual support group meetings.*