

# Angel Whispers

Fall, 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

*#thisisourvillage*

**H**ello Angel Whispers families,  
The change of seasons is upon us, the leaves are beginning to change colours and fall from the trees. The warm days of summer are replaced by the cooler days of autumn. We are forced to accept the change of seasons, we have no control over time passing, one season blends into the next, the days get shorter, the nights get longer and that darkness can feel reminiscent of the dark days of grief.

The entire experience sounds much like grief, doesn't it? We do not expect or anticipate ever experiencing a loss nor can we prepare our hearts for the loss of a baby. Discovering that your baby has died is a sudden, unexpected and traumatic experience. It is an experience outside of our control, that immediately launches us into the throws of shock, denial and disbelief, and the intense emotions that go hand in hand with grief.

When a baby dies, we grieve for our baby and we also grieve the lost hopes and dreams for the future.

From the moment we conceive our babies (and often times from even before that when we dream of having a family, we imagine our lives with our baby, we create hopes and dreams of what our lives together will be like.

"Hope" as defined by the Oxford

dictionary is "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen."

"Dream" is defined by the Oxford dictionary as "a cherished aspiration, ambition, or ideal."

So what we take from those definitions is a cherished expectation of what our lives will be like with our babies. What we want others to understand is that when we lose a baby, we also lose a 1 year old that won't celebrate a first birthday, a 5 year old that won't go to kindergarten, an 18 year old that won't graduate from high school or even a 25 or 30 year old that won't get married or become a parent of their own.



Each milestone we face without our babies in our arms is a trigger for our grief. Grief is the price we pay for

*Con't. on Pg. 2*

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Con't. from Pg. 1

love, there is no greater love than the love between a parent and a child, therefore there is no greater grief than what a parent experiences when a child dies. The death of a baby or child is so out of order from what we expect in the circle of life. We anticipate losing our grandparents and parents as they age but we don't expect to lose a child.

The waves of grief ebb and flow like the tides of the ocean. Early on in grief the waves are huge and crashing and can pull our feet out from under us...with time and support, our grief softens and the tide retreats but small manageable waves remain. At any time, the tide returns and once again those waves can overtake us.

Those waves of grief can be influenced by triggers, milestones we don't get the opportunity to experience with our babies; milestones that we looked forward to celebrating with our children. Other times those waves of grief hit us when we least expect them. We call these waves "grief bursts". For myself it has been 22 years since we lost Loren and over 17 years since we lost Brooklynn and those grief bursts still come, just less frequently as before. I've always looked at my grief bursts as a way of my babies saying "Mommy, don't forget about us".

When a grief burst happens and you don't immediately connect a trigger it can be helpful to check a calendar, reflect on what age your baby would be and what milestones would they be experiencing. 4 years ago in May/June, I found myself feeling more emotional that I had been in a long time. Doing the work I do professionally, I knew there must something subconsciously triggering my emotion. I took some time to think about what this timeframe represented.

I realized that Loren would have been graduating from high school around that time, her grade 12 graduation was a milestone we anticipated even before she was born. A milestone that was taken from us when Loren died, but a milestone that still triggered a grief

burst as it was a part of the hopes and dreams we created for Loren's life.

This newsletter focuses on the topic of lost hopes and dreams, an aspect of our grief often overlooked by society. As you grieve and mourn for your sweet babies, be gentle with yourself as you journey forward knowing that you will likely experience grief bursts connected to those lost hopes, dreams and missed milestones.

With love and understanding,

*Lori-Ann*

**Lori-Ann Huot**

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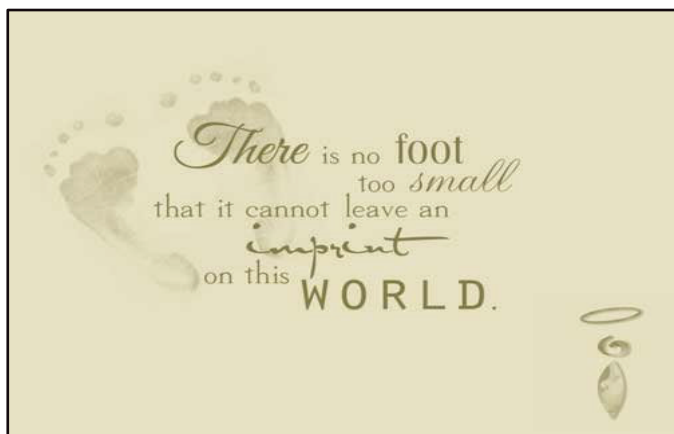


*Angel Whispers is a non-denominational program.*

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

# 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.

*Wyatt David Wilson - September 20, 2017*

*Hailey Lynn Lemoine  
May 29, 2020 - June 10, 2020*

*Baby Vorotilenko - June 2020*

*Katherine June Bain - June 24, 2020*

*Baby Bladen - July 3, 2020*

*Squirt Grenier - July 12, 2020*

*Luciano Jose Mendoza - August 10, 2020*

*Vayda Skaling - August 21, 2020*

*Bean Michetti-Stewart - September 24, 2020*

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## My Footprints

Author Unknown

These are my footprints, so perfect and so small.

These tiny footprints never touched the ground at all.

Not one tiny footprint, for now I have my wings.

These tiny footprints were meant for other things.

You will hear my tiny footprints, in the patter of the rain.

Gentle drops like angel's tears, of joy and not from pain.

You will see my tiny footprints, in each

butterflies' lazy dance.

I'll let you know I'm with you, if you give me the chance.

You will see my tiny footprints, in the rustle of the leaves.

I will whisper names into the wind and call each one that grieves.

Most of all, these tiny footprints are found on Mommy and Daddy's hearts.

'Cause even though I'm gone now, we'll never truly part.

*In loving memory of Zachary Gordon John Knott – November 30, 2015*

*Shared by Zachary's parents – Bev and Shawn*

# Imagine a Mother

by Lindsey Henke

Imagine a mother caressing her bulging belly, nine months pregnant and glowing from water retention and maternal anticipation as she speaks softly to her unborn child and gently encourages him to join her in the world.

Imagine a mother nervously hugging her daughter goodbye on the first day of kindergarten. Her daughter holds her close out of fear that her mother will let go as the mother holds her daughter close and fears the same.

Imagine a mother teaching her son how to ride a bike for the first time. The training wheels off. The wind in his hair and the smile on both of their faces as they revel in the shared pride they feel for his first sense of true adventure and independence.

Imagine a mother watching with joy as her daughter walks down the aisle, linked in arms with her father, as she approaches the man that will never truly be “good enough” for her sweet girl...as a mother always hopes her daughter would always stay “daddy’s little girl” forever.

Imagine a mother wiping away tears of fear of the unknown and pride in her soldier as her grown son embraces her with his strong, courageous, camouflaged arms as he prepares to board a plane to serve overseas.

Now, imagine that same mother awoken from sleep one night to a phone call, the police at the door, or to the eerie sound of screaming silence from the nursery.

Imagine a mother who hears...

“I’m sorry ‘mam, there was an accident, he didn’t make it...”

“I’m sorry ‘mam, there was nothing we could do. She wasn’t breathing when we went to wake her...”

“I’m sorry ‘mam, there were no survivors, his service to our country will be remembered...”

“I’m sorry ‘mam, there is no heartbeat. There will be no baby.”

Imagine a mother whose child’s life stops there and her life is lost amongst the fog left behind by the grim words that the unknowing messengers of death brought to her door.

Imagine a mother left imagining what life would have been like with her child now gone too soon.

Imagine this mother and realize that she is no figment of imagination.

She is your neighbour. She is your mother. She is your therapist, your maid, your gas station clerk, your nurse, your friend, your sister, she is you.

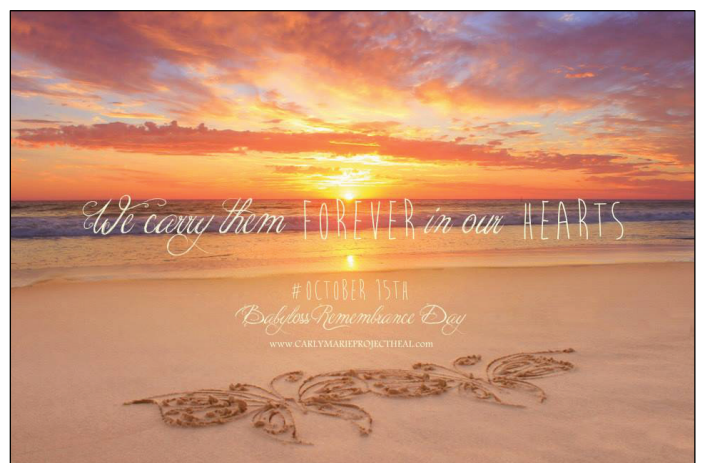
And remember, although she lives in fear of being only a figment of a mother.

She is just as real as moms with living children.

For she is still a mother.

She is the bereaved mother.

Created in an instant but remains for a lifetime.





## Life, Briefly by Grace Wutzke

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Two years ago I lost a baby to an early miscarriage while on my 10th anniversary trip to Maui with my husband. I found out I was pregnant on June 3, 2018, the morning we left for Maui, and waited to tell my husband through an agonizing two days of cancelled flights, rerouting, 3 hours of sleep in L.A., a 7 hour flight on opposite sides of the plane and a 3 hour wait for a rental car. Finally, after all these delays, on the beach at sunset, I told Stephen I was pregnant.

We celebrated and talked about the future with a new little one in it. The next day we spent a glorious day going on a boat ride, swimming in the ocean with the fish, visiting the Maui Ocean Center, shopping and enjoying pulled pork, shaved ice and another sunset on the beach. The day after that we spent 12 hours in the car driving around the island of Maui on the Road to Hana where we visited waterfalls, hiked through a rain forest, swam in a waterfall pool, visited caves and a black sand beach. I started spotting during the drive but figured it was implantation bleeding as I had experience something similar with at least one of my pregnancies with my daughters.

I was wrong. The next day, June 7, 2018, I miscarried and our baby was gone. I only knew about my pregnancy for 4 days. I held back the tears as we wandered around Maui for the rest of the week and when I got home I spent months crying when I was alone for the baby I wasn't going to have. Since we hadn't had time to tell anyone I was pregnant it was hard to talk about my miscarriage so I didn't.

The doctor called it a chemical pregnancy, but it was a pregnancy nevertheless. I believe life begins at conception so I wanted to acknowledge the life that was there ever so briefly and I named my baby Angela Viola. Angela because she was my angel baby and Viola because she was with my Nanny in heaven. I like to say that she was my adventurous one. She wanted to go to Maui and liked it so much she stayed there. Whenever I see a particularly beautiful sunset I think of her.

The next few months we tried to get pregnant a few more times with no success which only brought more tears. After a while we stopped trying and I worked toward being content with the two daughters we have been blessed with. I slowly gave away all my baby stuff to friends and family members as they got pregnant and had babies. I prayed for everyone who was pregnant, rejoiced over each baby that made it safely into their mother's arms and mourned with those who lost babies as well. Recently the desire for another baby resurfaced and we decided to give it another try.

This year, on May 31st I found out I was was pregnant again! I was so excited! I told my husband right away and we told the girls. They were thrilled! They gave my belly a hug and a kiss every morning and said "Good morning baby!". I made plans, did my initial bloodwork which confirmed my pregnancy, dreamed about mini-vans and diapers, picked up a change table and some baby things from a friend who no longer needed them, and applied for midwifery care. I told my family, a few friends and church family I was pregnant. At the same time I was also sad remembering the baby I had lost and anxious about this pregnancy. I gave my fears to the Lord and made up my mind to love this baby as much as I could for as long as baby would be there to love. I had so much energy with this pregnancy I was sure my baby was going to be a boy. I mowed the lawn and weeded the gardens and watered the plants more than I ever have before. I suspected my baby had a green thumb and really liked plants. My cherry shrub, apple tree and lilacs all burst into bloom while I was pregnant.

For a whole glorious 9 days I was so very happily pregnant. Then I started spotting again. I sobbed my heart out all night and pleaded with God to let me keep this baby. The spotting was light the next day so I thought maybe, just maybe I wasn't going to lose baby and it was just implantation bleeding after all. I went for bloodwork and cried the whole day because I didn't know if I was still pregnant. The next day, June 11th, I miscarried again. I knew baby was gone even before I got the results confirming the loss of my pregnancy.

*Life, Briefly, con't. on pg. 6*

Again, my baby was gone too soon. Again I am left with a broken heart and an empty womb. My arms will not hold my child and I am left to grieve. This time though I will not grieve alone. Those who knew I was pregnant I told of my loss. Their prayers are carrying me through this time of sadness and sorrow. I named this baby Joshua Paul. Joshua meaning "God is salvation" and Paul meaning "small" but also for my Grandpa in heaven. God is salvation for my baby though he is small. My favourite song during this pregnancy was "To God be the Glory". The last line is "but purer, and higher, and greater will be our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see." Joshua just

couldn't wait to see Jesus and I know he is safe in the arms of Jesus forever.

As for the future, I am unsure. I really don't know if I can endure this process again. I am thankful for each of the lives I conceived and I know God had a purpose for each of their lives, no matter how brief. For now I'll enjoy my daughters who are here while holding my angel babies in my heart. I trust God with the future, which may or may not include any more pregnancies, for He is good and His love endures forever.

## **For Baby Joshua**

Love Mommy

When I first knew you were here I rejoiced,  
your Daddy said "Hooray!"  
Your sisters were so excited,  
they couldn't wait 'till you could play.

You loved it when I did yard work,  
so I watered, pulled weeds, and mowed.  
I knew you must be a boy for sure,  
you loved the lawnmower so.

We never got to meet,  
for I carried you just a few weeks.  
Your life in my womb was too brief,  
and you left me with sorrow and grief.

Like a flower that blooms in the sun,  
so short was your life little one.  
Mere days of excitement and joy,  
and then you were gone baby boy.

Your name, which is Joshua Paul,  
means "God is salvation" though "small".  
I know this is true my dear son,  
and I'll meet you when my time is done.

I'm sad that I have to wait,  
'till we meet on that heavenly date,  
but I know you are happy with Jesus,  
and the others who've had to leave us.

Give my love to your sister up there,  
she's been there the last two years.  
Tell Angela Viola I love her,  
and I think of her too in my tears.

I'll love you my dear son, forever,  
and your memory I will treasure.  
You've changed my heart for the better,  
and you I will always remember.

# Rainbow Baby Birth Announcements

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## **Conan Douglas Kelly-Snider**

Born on June 12, 2020 weighing 9 lbs. 3 oz. to loving parents Sara and Adam  
And excited big sister Daphne.  
Conan's big brother Henry is smiling down on him from above.

## **Victoria Sarah Desbiens**

Born on July 15, 2020 weighing 6 lbs. 15 oz. to proud parents Maria and David.  
Victoria's sibling Sarai is watching over her from heaven.

## **Charles David Friedenberg**

Born on July 18, 2020 weighing 6 lbs. 10 oz. to excited parents Morgan and David.  
Charles has angels watching over him from above, celebrating his safe arrival.

## **Jack Cornelis Boere**

Born on July 18, 2020 weighing 6 lbs. 2 oz. to loving parents Elise and Jacco.  
Jack's big brother Weston is celebrating with the angels.

## **Tristan Gregory Matthiessen**

Born on July 28, 2020 weighing 8 lbs. 13 oz. to proud parents Karen and Brett  
and excited big sister Kasey.  
Tristan and Kasey have an older sibling watching over them from above.

## **Indie Arianna O'Connor**

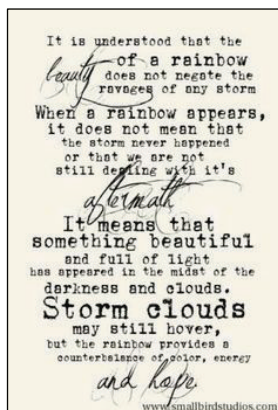
Born on August 25, 2020 weighing 5 lbs 12 oz. to excited parents Matt and Jessica.  
Indie's big sister Brooklyn is smiling down from heaven, celebrating her safe arrival.

## **Francis Marcel Dunphy**

Born on August 29, 2020 weighing 5 lbs. 6 oz. to loving parents Jade and Blake.  
Francis is watched over and protected by his big brother Alexander in heaven.

## **Mylah Munashe Mtengemi**

Born on September 23, 2020 weighing 9 lbs. 6 oz. to proud parents Sherrell and Jackson  
and excited siblings Lexus and Jackson. Mylah's big sister  
Harleigh is celebrating with the angels.



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 homes on days and times that work for them, and inviting other Angel WhispersRainbow families to join them. The babies and children can play while the parents talk, share and grieve together.

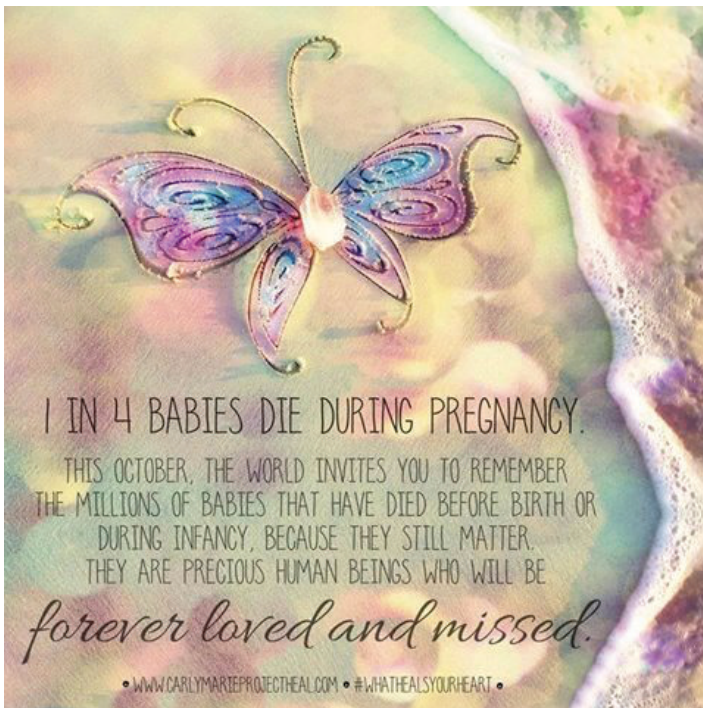
Angel Whispers Rainbow Connection con't. on pg. 8

Angel Whispers Rainbow Connection con't. from pg. 7

If you are interested in being part of the Rainbow Connection group and would like to plan a get-together

contact Lori-Ann at [angelwhispers@familiesfirst.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirst.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.



## 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.

For families seeking additional support please see:

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

## Just Those Few Weeks

By Susan Erling Martinez

For those few weeks—  
I had you to myself.  
And that seems too short a time  
to be changed so profoundly.

In those few weeks—  
I came to know you...  
and to love you.  
You came to trust me with your life.  
Oh, what a life I had planned for you!

Just those few weeks—  
It wasn't enough time to convince others  
how special and important you were.  
How odd, a truly unique person has recently  
died,  
and no one is mourning the passing.

Just a mere few weeks—  
And no "normal" person would cry all night  
over a tiny, unfinished baby.  
Or get depressed and withdrawn day after  
endless day.  
No one would, so why am I?

You were just those few weeks, my little  
one.  
You darted in and out of my life too quickly.  
But it seems that's all the time you needed  
to make my life so much richer  
and give me a small glimpse of eternity.



# Sometimes I See My Child

by Jennifer Marie Lewin, February, 2006

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 never grasped  
Of a cry never comforted

Sometimes I see my child  
And realize  
That I will always be its mother  
And it 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 harbour  
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 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 dreams for this child  
Have not been wasted  
That all my thoughts for this 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 questions  
I feel privileged  
I feel privileged because I was part of a  
miracle  
Even though this miracle seemed too short  
here on earth  
I will have an eternity with God to embrace it

Sometimes I see my child  
And I have peace.

*"I will not forget you. I have carved you on the  
palm of my hand." Isaiah 49:15*

# I Miss Your Firsts the Most

By: Matthew McAtamney-Greenwood

I hate that I did not hear you cry,  
Or see you wriggle, smile and fly.  
There are so many firsts that I will not see,  
Like riding a bike, and having a pee.  
Learning to count upon your hand,  
Making a noise while starting a band.  
Starting to crawl, walk and run,  
Playing with toys and having such fun.

But of everything I have lost,  
I miss your firsts the most.

I hate you're not here laying in my arms,  
Keeping you safe and away from all harms.  
I miss your tiny feet and your delicate toes,  
At least you can be happy and without any woes.  
Your precious fingers and cute little hands,  
Unable to build any castles in the sand.  
No swimming at all in waters of blue,  
Or potty training and learning to poo.

But of everything I have lost,  
I miss your firsts the most.

I hate I won't see you all grown up,  
Owing a kitten or even a pup.  
I miss that button nose upon your sweet face,  
And knowing you will not win in any race.  
I knew from the start how beautiful you'd be,  
And then you came out looking a lot like me.  
No fingers or thumbs or ears you had missing,  
So perfect you were just right for kissing.

But of everything I have lost,  
I miss your firsts the most.

I hate not seeing you dressed up to the nines,  
To go on a date behind enemy lines.  
No wedding for you to marry a spouse,  
Or darting around and wrecking my house.  
Not growing old or learning new tricks,  
Or having a child and feeling them kick.  
You will never work, or dance and sing,  
And you won't ever meet our future king.

But of everything I have lost,  
I miss your firsts the most.

I hate it's not me up there in those clouds,  
Looking down at you and feeling so proud.  
How tall you would grow is one thing that I'd bet,  
And water fights where you'd be soaking wet.  
Although there would be days where you'd be all rotten,  
You would still always be loved and never forgotten.  
There are so many more firsts I have no space to write,  
But missing them all, including the fights.

But of everything I have lost,  
I miss your firsts the most.

# Alanna's Story

by Alanna Thompson

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September the tenth will always be a painful reminder of what my husband and I lost. On September 10th, 2008 our son "Braidon Thomas Bass" was born premature and became an angel ten minutes later. This is my story.

I discovered I was expecting in June 2008. I didn't feel any different than usual, but my husband kept insisting that I was, in fact, pregnant. I laughed every time he mentioned those words, I had previously been told that I could not get pregnant. So when he kept saying I think you are pregnant I just shook it off. After a while of his persistence I finally gave in, and on our way home one afternoon we stopped and bought two pregnancy tests. Sure enough they came up positive. I was shocked, there was no way that I could be pregnant. So we drove the 24 miles back to town and purchased another test, when that also came up positive I knew that what was impossible just became possible for me.

Later that week I went to my doctor who confirmed that I was indeed expecting. My first scan showed nothing more than a little ball, which I called a lima bean. I was told that I had to be roughly eight weeks along. We told a few selected people that I was expecting. I soon became known as mama lima bean, because I had told everyone that our child looked like a lima bean. June, July and half way into August everything went smoothly. I ate every healthy item I could, took my vitamins, read every label on every package I picked up. I read every bit of information on pregnancy and child birth methods that I could get my hands on.

Truthfully I was not thrilled about childbirth, so I asked if I could deliver my child via c-section. So with that worked out my baby was due to be born around January 17th, 2009.

Towards the middle of August I began to feel extremely hot all of the time. I live in the Bahamas so with it being summer, and the fact that pregnant women tend to feel warmer, I assumed that this accounted for my hot feelings. But then I began

throwing up my food, I thought this was odd, I was past the first three months, and every thing I had read stated that morning sickness is more likely to happen in the first three months. I talked to a few people and one of my friends said that morning sickness could happen at any time, that she in fact threw up the whole 9 months. I am not a person to throw up easily, I have a very strong stomach. But for some reason my strong stomach had gone out the window, and in place of it gave me a nose that smelled every little smell out there and a stomach that refused to keep food or liquids down. After suffering I finally gave in and asked if there was anything that was safe to take. Some days I threw up 13 times. Most days no less than 9 times. I was told that gravol was safe to take. I was nervous at first, I didn't want to harm my child. But the thought of continuing to throw up all of the time, and the fear that my baby would not get the needed nutrition if I wasn't keeping my food down, over powered the fear of taking the gravol and so I started taking half a gravol before I ate.

With the vomiting semi controlled, I began to get even hotter. Although I was running no fever that a thermometer could register, I felt like someone had lit my insides on fire and I was roasting from the inside out. Everyday when I would get home from work I would lay in a ice cold bath for a hour to cool myself down. These baths soon became my favourite part of my day. By this time my baby had made his first movement and so making his existence known to me. He was the most active in the afternoons, and roughly at the exact time I was preparing for my bath, he would start moving. I thought how odd the little flutters felt, and how strong he was for being so small. So every afternoon with a book in my hand I lost myself in my bath with my baby fluttering and me reading.

When I would finish my bath my husband would rub cocoa butter on my abdomen to prevent stretch marks, and after the first few times, it was as if my baby knew his daddy's hands were on

*Alanna's Story con't. on pg. 12*

my stomach, and he would move. Towards the end my baby would actually make my abdomen move, I teased that the cone shape that would form under my skin and the movement I felt was our baby's tiny head. He would only do this when my husband rubbed me down in lotion. It was so amazing to watch. I truly believe that babies even in the womb can sense our movements and hear our voices and they in turn do little things to let us know that they are here also.

A hurricane was approaching our island toward the beginning of September, so with the hurricane approaching we boarded our store and our home and road it out. It really was so small that no damage came to our island. But I decided to take the next few days off to rest. My baby was a little more active on the night of September 9th, 2008. I thought that this was because he was into his 5th month of life. I weighed 106 pounds at this point in my pregnancy, I was about 95 when I became pregnant with our son. So even the slightest movement that our son made I could feel very well. I went to bed a little earlier than normal, I was feeling tired and put it off to the active past few days. I awoke right before 1 a.m. on September 10 with a small pain in my lower back and asked my husband to fill me a hot tub, thinking that I must have done too much the day before and was paying the price now. My husband went to turn on the hot water heater and I felt the urge to pee. So I stood up off the bed and headed to the master bath room. My son came before I knew what was happening. I had no pains or indication that I was in labor. I yelled for my husband to come quick.

He picked up the tiny baby and we both thought that there was no way the child could be alive. I will never forget when my husband touched him, and he moved. The little infant wrapped his fingers around my husbands and his little legs moved. My heart broke knowing that he

wouldn't live for long. Knowing he was too small, yet so perfect in every way. I sat there frozen not knowing what to do. My husband handed me our baby, and got a towel to rest him on. I went to our bedroom and rested on the floor, I hadn't delivered the placenta at this point. My husband got his cell phone to call for help. I knelt on the floor watching the tiny baby until he died. I laid him down and waited knowing that I had to deliver the placenta. My husband made all of the phone calls. Found out what doctor was on call for emergencies that night. We don't have hospitals, we also don't have doctor offices that are open past 5 p.m. Our island shuts down starting at 3 p.m. and by 5 p.m. we are basically a ghost town, the only thing left open after 5 p.m. are the grocery stores and one gas station.

*I will never forget when my husband touched him, and he moved. The little infant wrapped his fingers around my husbands and his little legs moved.*

I have low blood sugar, and my husband was afraid that I would pass out from this. I was losing a lot of blood and we still had a 24 mile drive to town. I asked for a glass of orange juice and told my husband that I won't leave until I delivered the placenta. I had read that it doesn't take long after

the baby for the placenta to deliver. Sure enough 20 minutes later the placenta delivered. But when it did I knew instantly that something wasn't right with it. As soon as the placenta delivered I cleaned up and dressed, telling my husband to get the shower curtain from the guest bathroom along with a blanket and a pillow and protect the back seat of our car with the items. With nothing more than our cell phones, our baby, the placenta and what we were wearing we headed for town. We arrived to the doctor's office and the moment I stood the blood poured over the walkway and into the office. Both of our mothers had come to be with us. My blood pressure was high, but the bleeding had eased for the time being. I was checked out and found to be roughly 3 cm. dilated at that time. Right after 3 a.m. we were told we could leave, but because we lived so far from medical help we had to stay in town.



We camped out at my husband's moms place for the night. With all that had happened, the reality of what we lost had not sunk in. I slept very little. I had no pains, I just felt a little worn out. The next morning we returned to the doctor's for a follow up, and was told that my pressure was still too high. The doctor kept me there for a few hours monitoring me and said that if it wasn't down by Friday he would put me on pills. We were allowed to go home, but I had to rest. We got what we needed along with a blood pressure monitor and headed home. I knew that a mess awaited us. When we got home, my husband made me wait in the car, and he went in to clean up our bedroom and bathroom, where the blood stained a large portion of our floor. I swear that I cried for hours when I got inside, the sight of where it had all happened and the knowledge that something was wrong with the placenta all compounded into one long period of crying. By Friday my pressure was still high, and the doctor did put me on pills, and told me to come back in on Monday to be checked again. Monday was no better, I was put on another type of pills, and even then the two types didn't keep my pressure at a good enough reading. I was told to come in on Thursday when a ultrasound tech would be up from another island and she could scan me to see what was going on.

That Thursday I had a scan done of my uterus, ovaries and lungs. It had been eight days since I had my son. The scan showed that my ovaries were full of cysts. The doctors words were "your ovaries are the size of grapefruits". We were told that I had to seek further medical treatment. At this point they weren't sure what was wrong. The scan had also showed that fluid was pocketing in my body because of the high blood pressure that was putting a strain on my kidneys. I was forwarded to a obstetrician and gynecologist on another island. We packed what we thought we

would need, although we had no idea how long we would be gone for. At this point I was losing weight rapidly. My skin had taken on a yellowish appearance, and the majority of the bones in my body were now visible. Standing was slowly becoming a task for me, every time I stood up my head began to feel fussy and my body felt like it would give out at any moment. A pressure would enclose around my forehead and force me to sit or lie down. I knew that something now was very wrong.

We boarded the boat for the 4 hour ride from Abaco, Bahamas to Nassau, Bahamas, we arrived at around 8 p.m. on Friday September 19 2008.

The next 9 days we spent in and out of doctor's offices and the hospital. Samples were taken from my womb. My blood pressure was slowly brought under control and a diagnoses was made.

I was diagnosed with gestational trophoblastic disease. The doctors were amazed that none of the cysts that covered the placenta and lined my ovaries were on my baby. I had given birth to a perfect baby. I was lucky that the cysts

had not turned cancerous and I would not have to have chemotherapy shots unless the high hormone levels failed to lower. For the next 6 months I would have to have weekly blood work done. But other than that I should recover just fine. So once again we boarded the boat and headed back home.

All should have been fine or so we thought. The postpartum bleeding had almost stopped. It was now two weeks since my son was born. For the next few weeks I slowly seemed to heal, but pain was always present in my lower stomach. I thought this was normal, so I failed to ask my doctor about it. I went weekly for blood work, rested as much as my mind would allow. But the pain didn't let up. Postpartum bleeding lasts

between 4-6 weeks or so said the doctors and the books I had read. But for some reason when the 6 weeks was up and I thought all was well, it started all over again. And so persisted from September, 2008 - April, 2009. After the 6 weeks of postpartum bleeding, I had a 2 week break, then the bleeding started again, went for a week stopped for 2-3 days and so this persisted until the end of November. After that I would bleed for a week and then get 2 weeks break, then it would start again. This new phase lasted until April, 2009. With this I had pain everyday of my life. For 7 months I never really had a day without pain. Even now with it being one year on September 10th, 2009 I still get pains if I lift anything heavy, I still do not drive because the pains reoccur and I am scarred that it will bring on the bleeding again. I did 6 months of weekly blood work and then at the end of the six months I was scanned again, the cysts were still there but smaller that before. By this time I was tired and warn out from the persistent bleeding that I spoke to the doctor. He prescribed a birth control pill, he said because my hormone levels had risen that high due to the pregnancy my body just needed a little help getting back to normal. I am basically back to normal now physically, I had lost over 20 pounds and I have gained roughly 10 back in the past 11 months.

Although my body has healed itself, my heart has not. Burying our son did not give closure to what we lost like so many people said it would. I think when you have to lay a life that was so young to rest, the thoughts of what the infant will never have the chance to experience weighs heavy on your mind. I filled out Braidon's baby book, I put in all of the small things that made his existence so special. We have no pictures of him, just memories of what he looked like and how he felt when we held him. Even now

I awake at 1 a.m. every morning, the time that he was born. I cried for hours everyday, seeing other mothers with infants was so painful that I would avoid shopping isles with new mothers on them. I avoided seeing friends and family that came home with new babies. I still cry when I think of my son. And knowing that there is a chance that if I did become pregnant again that this could all happen again makes it even worse. I talk about what happened to anyone that will listen, and so many of them have stories of their own. I am amazed how opening up to someone makes then open up also. I have met a lot of really nice people since this happened to me. So many people that I have known for years, that have since my loss, told me of their miscarriage or infants death.

*Since you'll never be forgotten*

*We pledge to you today*

*A hallowed place within our hearts*

*Is where you'll always stay*

I searched for a while before I found a site that was helpful and seemed to truly care about the people that contacted them. When I found *Angel Whispers* I was drawn to how inviting the site was. And once I emailed and got such a quick response I knew that this was a place that could help me heal. The program coordinator contacted me and I must say that she was a true blessing

to me. She sent out a care package clear from Canada down to my husband and I in the Bahamas. When ever I need to talk I know she is just an email away. People around us seem to forget so fast that we have lost something so special to us, each day without our son is a day of grief; although not always accompanied with tears, it is still a day that burdens our hearts and plays on our minds. I still count down how old he should be at this moment, and what progress he would have been making. I still wonder what his first word would have been and which tooth would have come in first. I know that no amount of time will heal my heart, and that his memory will always be with us. I know that one day I will be with him again. But for now I must keep his memory alive.

*Alanna's Story con't. on pg. 15*

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*Alanna's Story con't. from pg. 14*

I have added a poem below that I truly love and I pray that the words will also touch you.

*If tears could build a stairway  
And memories were a lane  
We would walk right up to Heaven  
And bring you back again*

*No farewell words were spoken  
No time to say goodbye  
You were gone before we knew it  
And only God knows why*

*Our hearts still ache in sadness  
And secret tears still flow  
What it meant to lose you  
No one will ever know*

*But know we know you want us  
To mourn for you no more  
To remember all the happy times  
Life still has much in store*

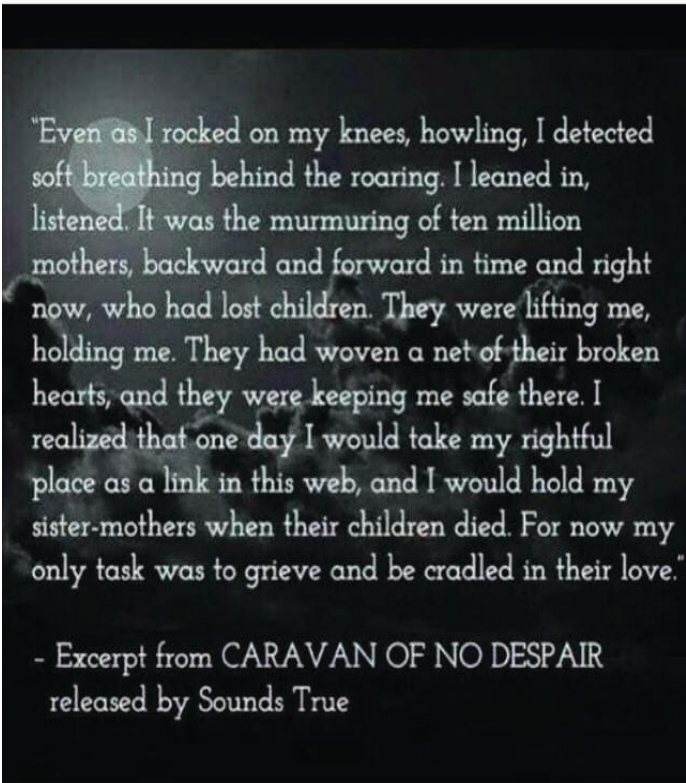
*Since you'll never be forgotten*

*We pledge to you today*

*A hallowed place within our hearts*

*Is where you'll always stay*

**Written by Alanna Thompson**



*"Even as I rocked on my knees, howling, I detected soft breathing behind the roaring. I leaned in, listened. It was the murmuring of ten million mothers, backward and forward in time and right now, who had lost children. They were lifting me, holding me. They had woven a net of their broken hearts, and they were keeping me safe there. I realized that one day I would take my rightful place as a link in this web, and I would hold my sister-mothers when their children died. For now my only task was to grieve and be cradled in their love."*

*- Excerpt from CARAVAN OF NO DESPAIR  
released by Sounds True*

## **Forever Love**

Anonymous

Even though we never met  
I know your face by heart.

Even though we never spoke  
I can hear your voice.

Even though I never held you  
I feel your weight in my arms.

Even though we'll never lie beneath the same  
stars  
you will always shine above us.

# Fundraising Opportunities

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## Navy n'Co. Angel Wing Car Decals benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program.

**A message from Natasha Stelmach, owner of Navy n'Co.:**

*This year has impacted us all especially non-profit groups. I wanted to create a fundraiser to help support a very special group. I believe that putting a voice to miscarriage and infertility is very important. In Fort Saskatchewan, we have a group called Angel Whispers. This group provides support for families that are struggling with loss, infertility, and miscarriage. Due to COVID, they could not do their gala fundraiser this year.*



*I have decided to raise money to donate for Angel Whispers. I am selling angel wing car decals. There are a few options to choose from, all white, pink/blue (miscarriage ribbon colours), all pink or all blue. I am charging \$15 for the decal in the colour of your choice (listed above) and \$10 will be donated for each purchase. The other option is to add a name or date to your wings, I will be charging \$20 and \$15 will be donated. To place an order for the angel wing car decals, contact Natasha through the Navy n'Co. Facebook page -*



<https://www.facebook.com/>

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Natasha Stelmach for raising money for the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program through the sale of these beautiful car decals!

## Can You Help?

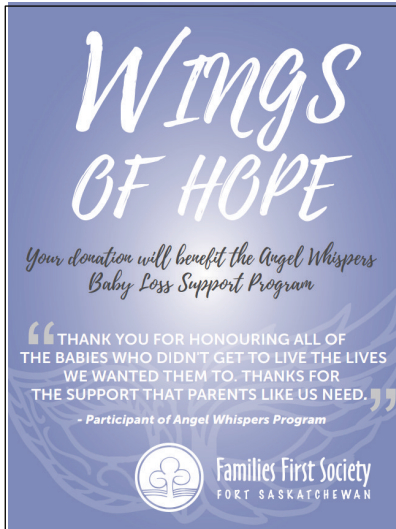
The Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program receives no contract funding.

Instead, Angel Whispers relies on fundraisers, grants, donations and community partnerships to sustain programs and supports for grieving families.

To make a Wings of Hope donation to the program, please contact Lori-Ann Huot, Program Coordinator @ (780)995-5595 ext 225 or [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca).



# Fundraising Opportunities



## 2020 Whispers of Hope Gala benefiting the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support

**Program - date TBA** 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 made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone the 2nd Annual Whispers of Hope Masquerade Gala originally scheduled for March 14, 2020.

We are hopeful that a new date can 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).

The Whispers of Hope Gala committee will be meeting in the next few weeks to discuss the future of our rescheduled gala, because Covid continues to be ongoing we are looking at the possibility we may not be able to reschedule in the near future and are considering alternate fundraising options (ie. online gala vs. online silent auction). We will let everyone know what decisions we make.

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!

*The Whispers of Hope Gala planning committee.*

### **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).

# Healing Opportunities

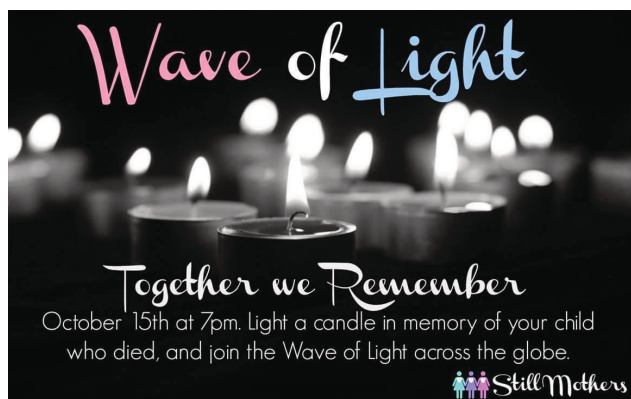
## Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day High Level Bridge Lighting

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

- Date: Thursday, October 15, 2020
- Location: Ezio Farone Park, 11004-97 Ave., Edmonton
- Time: Dusk

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

*On Thursday, October 15th, 2020, we will recognize International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. The City of Edmonton will light the bridge for us at dusk to represent and honour all families who have been touched by the loss of a precious baby during pregnancy or any time after birth. We hope by then we will be able to gather together as a caring and compassionate group. If the restrictions for the Global Pandemic have changed by October 15, 2020, we would plan to meet for this heartfelt ceremony at the Ezio Farone Park, located 11004 97 Avenue. Parking is on the street and there is transit near by. This park overlooks the Edmonton River Valley, with the best view of the bridge. There is a small gazebo that will be our meeting place. Time to be determined but in the past, we have gathered at dusk. As we get closer to the date, we will send out/post the time. We'll have candles for everyone to light. If we can gather and you're planning to attend, please send us a quick email so we can plan the event based on potential numbers. Our email address is [heartsbabyloss@shaw.ca](mailto:heartsbabyloss@shaw.ca).*



### **October 15th - the Wave of Light**

At 7:00 pm in all time zones, families around the world will light candles (and leave the candle burning for at least an hour) in memory all of the precious babies who have been lost during pregnancy or in infancy. Too many families grieve in silence, help to break the silence

# Healing Opportunities

## 2020 Baby Loss Memorial Service



*Remembering our Losses...*

Alberta Health Services And Covenant Health  
Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program

An invitation for families  
who have experienced the loss of a baby

*Participating Hospitals:*

Fort Saskatchewan, Grey Nuns, Leduc,  
Misericordia, Northeast Health Centre,  
Royal Alexandra, Stollery, Sturgeon, Westview, Wetaskiwin

*Service of Remembrance*

1:00 p.m., Sunday, October 18, 2020

*Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions,  
it will be a virtual service only. Families will be able  
to view the service via online streaming:*

<https://oneroomstreaming.com/family-and-friends>

**Event ID:** hainstocks@dignitymemorial.com  
**Event PW:** GTIPJN

In order to have your baby's name acknowledged in this virtual event, you will need  
to register by October 16 at noon. To do so, or for more information, please contact  
(780)735-4506 or [patti.walker@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:patti.walker@albertahealthservices.ca)

Families will be able to view the service using the login information above  
for 90 days after.



## Pilgrims BriarPatch Centre for Grieving Families

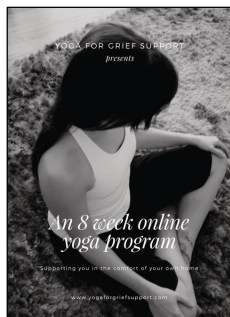
**\*Expressive Arts for Children  
ages 5 to 12 years old  
who have experienced the  
death of someone they love.** We offer art,  
music, play, puppetry and drama for our youngest  
mourners to explore their unique grief journey  
in a safe and compassionate setting. Our  
parent/guardian group meets 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.

## Christmas Healing Hands Workshop

Traditionally each December, we plan a Saturday afternoon for our Angel Whispers families to come together to create a memorial ornament in memory of the babies that they will forever carry in their hearts. Because of Covid-19, we won't likely be able to be together for this year's workshop. Instead we will design ornament kits for families to create their memorial ornament at home. Stay tuned to Facebook or our website, [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers) for more information.



## 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).



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

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

*- Kathy Calvin*

- To Strathcona County Family and Community Services, the Mayor of Sherwood Park and council for the 3 year Social Framework Community Grant to help Angel Whispers sustain programs and supports to grieving families.
- To the Alberta Government for the Community Initiatives Program Grant to help Angel Whispers sustain services to grieving families.
- To 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 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 Natasha Stelmach for generously donating her time to put care packages together 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: Jacqueline, 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

*Thank You's con't. on pg. 21*





Thank You's con't. from pg. 20

will instead be used towards our rescheduled Gala or online event that we hope to plan in the near future!

- To Natasha Stelmach from Navy n'Co. for raising money for the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program through the Angel Wing Car Decal fundraiser!

## Pickle's Poem

Sometimes we sit and think  
Why you left us so very soon  
Before we got the chance  
To pick colours for your room

We wish we had the opportunity  
to hold you close and tight  
And be there to comfort you  
When monsters scared you at night

We wanted you to stay  
So very very bad  
So that we could have had the chance  
To be called Mom and Dad

But we know that in our hearts  
Your parents we will always be  
And when we lay down our heads  
In our dreams it's you we will see.

*Love You Times Infinities,  
Mom and Dad*

*In loving memory of Pickle*



## 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. For families seeking additional support please see:*

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

# About 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
- Miscarriage Support Group

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



**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*

*Angel Whispers is a non-denominational program.*

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

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