

February, 2012

Sharing Parents is a Sacramento based non-profit organization devoted to supporting parents who have experienced the loss of a baby from the time of conception through early infancy.

Our Purpose is to provide a safe environment where grieving parents with similar experiences can come together and share their feelings about the loss and the love of their babies. Our meetings are also a place where parents express the love they have for their baby in their compassion for others, where they can give and receive emotional support by sharing common experiences and learn about the natural grief process while working through and resolving their loss.

We Offer a variety of meetings and support services that are designed to help parents throughout the different stages of their grief. There is never a fee to attend our meetings.

Our Meeting Place

Mercy Women's Center
650 Howe Avenue, Ste #530
Sacramento, CA 95825

Our Mailing Address & Phone Number

Sharing Parents
P.O. Box 19538
Sacramento, CA 95819-0538
(916) 424-5150

Upcoming General Meetings

February 12 Grieving As a Couple
March 11 : Exploring Grief and Father's Group discussion
April 1 : Video – Footprints on Our Hearts

Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings

February 26 : Subsequent Pregnancy
March 25 : Subsequent Pregnancy
April 22 : Subsequent Pregnancy

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What we have once enjoyed
and deeply loved we can never lose,
for all that we love deeply
becomes a part of us.

- Helen Keller

Message from the Sharing Parents President

2012 Sharing Parents Volunteers

President

Rebecca Erickson

Vice President

Deanna Lockhart

Secretary

Noël Lehman

Treasurer

Ken Hisey

Past President

Kristie Avila

Short Term Grief Coordinator

Stacey Hisey

Pregnancy Interruption Coordinator

OPEN

Listening Line Coordinator

Lynne Genzel

Listening Line Volunteers

Molly Lawrence

Noël Lehman

Oct. Memorial Coordinator

Jennifer Stiltz

Community Outreach

Kristin Lunardi

Event/Fundraiser Coordinator

OPEN

Librarian

Rebecca Erickson

Newsletter Editor

Brion Maciel

Newsletter Assistant

Allison Clavel

Webmaster

Ken Hisey

General Volunteers:

Shannon Anderson,
Sarah & Nelson Canales,
Neil Genzel, Joanna Hurt,
Molly Lawrence, Heidi Lozano,
Laura McHugh,
Mia Omega, Ryan Stiltz

At this time of year, many people are trying to remake themselves and live up to New Year Resolutions. The casual use of “Happy New Year” greeting at the beginning of the year seems to imply that we should be happy. What about those of us who are grieving the loss of a baby or babies? What does *happiness without our babies in our arms* mean? What would happiness even look like? Is happiness without our babies in our arms *even possible*?

And what does the *New Year* mean? Early on in my grieving, I would compare holidays or other yearly events (like birthday parties) to what I was doing in the year before my loss. In my mind I would think, “Last year at this time I was pregnant and had no idea that stillbirth was a possibility.” It seems like my loss date became a huge divider of my life. For me, there was the time *before* Emma’s death and the time *after*. After Emma’s death, I became a different person with a different value set of what is important. Unlike non-grievers who may be choosing to remake themselves as part of a New Year’s Resolution, I did not choose for my daughter to die. I did not request this makeover. For some grievors, the New Year might mean an opportunity to make a fresh new start and leave some of the pain of the past year behind.

Luckily, soon after the stillbirth of Emma Margaret, my mother encouraged me to attend a Sharing Parents General Meeting. I did not think of myself as a person who needed a support group. Was I mistaken! I can’t imagine how different my grief journey would be without having had the support of Sharing Parents. In General Meetings, I realized I was not alone. I learned that, although my grief is unique, I shared many experiences with others. By listening to others share their experiences, I gained insight into my own grief. In Short Term Grief, I met a wonderful group of friends with whom I continue to share my grief journey. As a Sharing Parents Volunteer, I feel as if I have a new extended family. We share a bond that no one else truly knows who hasn’t experienced the loss of a child or children. I am so thankful that I met these people, although I wish my daughter didn’t have to die for it to happen.

I hope you have received, or will soon receive, support in some way from Sharing Parents. Our Listening Line is there if you ever just need to talk openly to someone who will not judge you. In General Meetings, participants give and receive support from other participants. There is no restriction as to how long you can attend General Meetings or how far out from your loss you can be. Grief sometimes resurfaces at different times for different people. Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings are for those contemplating or experiencing a pregnancy after a loss. We have numerous library books in our Lending Library available for check out at all of our meetings. Our website has the current and past Newsletter editions available as well as links to other grief resources. Also on our website is the Parent to Parent Resource which helps connect individuals with similar losses.

Sharing Parents is a group of volunteers eager to support you in your grief journey. I sincerely hope we can be of help in the upcoming year.

Rebecca Erickson
2012 Sharing Parents’ President

Remembering Our Babies With Love

Anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are difficult times for us. We remember with love...

FEBRUARY

Faith Annalyse Alvarez
Makena Marie Anderson
Chancellor Aris Patton
Baby Ashton
Meagan Rene Barstone
William Evan Beebe
Baby Berger
Faith Ann Blakely
Ryan Austin Martin Bridges
Cameraon Michael-Lee Burdick
Joshua David Cardoza
Annabelle Olivia Castablo
Weston Cruz
Colin Devey
Baby Dressen
Saffi Hernandez-Christensen
Baby Espinoza
Baby Espinoza
Baby Feuerstraeter
Andrew Gallagher
Claire Gibson
Baby Herkins
Zackary Herkins
Jolie Marie Hurtt
Brennan Jacks
Baby Kawelo
Ericson Kelley
Sean Latham
Baby Legrand
Kaylee Ann Lindberg
Isabella Lopez Rye
Pedro Jose Lopez
Baby Lowell
Sophia Mamola
Zachary Orbus
Baby Pethel
Baby Powell
Kaenan Quinn
Madison Nicole Souza
Emily Diane Stiltz
Sophia Tolin
Joaquin Victor Torrence

MARCH

Elizabeth Adame
Amelia Aitchison-Cooksy
Kyle Benjamin Avila
Lisa Jeline Benson
Joy Kathleen Bik
Kellan Alexander Bik
Nick Boysen
Steven Kent Brown
Gracie Cahill
Jordan William Davidson
Lindsay Rose Denier
Ayiah Cherie Ricelle Harris
Babies Feuerstraeter
Baby Fraser
Magdalena Louis Frieze
Avery Graham
Baby Hall
William Henry
Baby Hernandez
Brennan Jacks
Madison Kristine Joppa
Baby Kaplan
Matthew Love
Emily Loreen Meyer
Megan Oliva
Dylan Pena
Elijah James Dominique Rankin
Kaylee Marie Rubitski
Ty Scellato
Sophia Shaw
Baby Belle Simmons
Baby Szillinsky
Baby Tam
Kylee Valle
Tyler Vassion
Arbor Warzecha
Aria Wermund
Baby Winings

APRIL

Mia Faith Avery
Kaitlyn Badertscher
Adam Joseph Bik
Hayley Maureen Bik
Margaret Bressler
Midori Anne Briel
Mark Brittain, Jr.
Baby Chand
Elizabeth Ann Collie
Baby Crawford
Baby Davis
Baby Denny
Colin Frederick Foley
Baby Fosco
Babies Fremont
Kaitlyn Nicole Hart
Christopher Imbriano
Hannah Joann Lawrence
Tessa Elizabeth Lockhart Ralston
Baby McCoy
Samuel James McCoy
Baby Ocel
Kaenan Quinn
Daniel Christian Sauseda
Alejanda Sepulveda
Parys Gavin S. Stokes
Evan Vargas
Richard Warzecha
Reagan Ellis Westrup
Grace Woodman
Rose Zeier

Names are entered through the sign-in sheet at all Sharing Parents meetings.

Parent Submissions

I wish you enough....

by Shannon Anderson
Makena Marie Elizabeth's Mommy

As I start this new year as a volunteer with Sharing Parents I reflect back on my journey and what has helped me with the pain of losing my only daughter Makena, who would now have been a thriving 2 1/2 year old. I am so thankful for Sharing Parents and the friends that I have made along the way....I wanted to share something that my mother recently shared with me, because it really made me sit back and think about my life and my loss.

Have you ever heard someone say "I wish you enough"? I did a week ago and it keeps popping back into my head.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hello's to get you through the final good-bye.

So I wish you enough of everything. I hope that this new year brings you much comfort, much good health, and much joy. I wish all the beauty in the world for you and your family for 2012. Enjoy the little things.

Parent Submissions

On behalf of Sharing Parents, I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. The holiday season can be so difficult for many of us as we face our first, or yet another, holiday without our precious babies. It's been four years since I lost my sweet Nicholas, and each holiday season continues to remind me that there is one less stocking...one less excited face on Christmas morning...one less sweet face in our holiday photo. It gets easier in some ways, and in other ways the grief is still there, just as it was the day that he left us. In an effort to try and come to peace with this holiday, I focused on honoring him as much as I could during the holidays with our family traditions. We hung his ornaments on the tree and talked about him...We released a balloon for him... I held his picture close to me...We spent some time in front of the tree that we planted in honor of him. These things helped me feel a closeness to him and made getting through the holidays a little easier. This past year I also found new ways to celebrate him. I had the honor of speaking about him at the Sharing Parents Annual October Memorial ceremony. This was something that I always wanted to do, but didn't have the courage to speak until this past year. I have also had the pleasure of presenting to professionals in the community about Sharing Parents, and sharing my story about losing my precious son. I will continue to look for ways to honor him in this new year and in the years to come. As we begin this new year, I hope that we can all find ways to continue to honor our babies, whether it's by starting new traditions, or keeping the ones that we have been doing...whatever we need to do to continue to feel the closeness to our babies and to find more inner peace and hope toward the future.

Kristin Lunardi, Sharing Parents Volunteer
Nicholas' Mommy

Community Outreach

How did you find out about Sharing Parents? Did your doctor tell you? A social worker? Or did you hear from a friend or maybe even a stranger about Sharing Parents? Some of us out there were referred by professionals that were there when we lost our precious babies. Some of us weren't given any information by professionals. Our goal this year is to do more outreach with professionals in the field in an effort to make them more aware and familiar with our support group and consequently refer families to Sharing Parents. This past year Sharing Parents has done several presentations with social workers and has also attended the Sacramento OBGYN conference to give out our information and inform professionals about our support group. We would like to improve upon our table presentation at these events and would like your input. We would like to have a testimonial section at our table where parents can talk briefly (a couple of sentences to a paragraph) about your experience with Sharing Parents. We would like to post this on our table display. If you are interested in doing this could you please e-mail us with your testimonial? You may be anonymous. Sharing Parents thanks you in advance for your assistance.

sharingparents@yahoo.com

Call for Newsletter articles or submissions, especially from newly bereaved parents:

For some, writing about their grief can be therapeutic. Please share your experiences with others in the newsletter. Please send newsletter contributions to sharingparents@yahoo.com with "Newsletter Contribution" in the Subject Line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is April 15, 2012.

Librarian's Corner

by Rebecca Erickson

The newest addition to the Sharing Parents' Library is *Still. A Collection of honest artwork and writings from the heart of a grieving mother.* Three copies of this newly published book have been donated to the Sharing Parent's Library.

Still. A collection of honest artwork and writings from the heart of a grieving mother.

By Stephanie Paige Cole. Foreword by Kara L.C. Jones. 2010.

Still. is relatively short book, but its 56 pages are packed with intensity and meaning. Grief advocate and author Stephanie Paige Cole is also the founder of The Sweet Pea Project. Cole regretted not keeping the blanket in which her 41 week stillborn daughter, Madeline, had been wrapped. She began the Sweet Pea Project which gives donated blankets to hospitals and birthing centers so babies can be wrapped in them and the parents can keep the blanket as a keepsake. The Sweet Pea Project also uses the proceeds from *Still.* to donate copies of the book to hospitals and bereavement groups. By distributing *Still.* directly to the hospitals, Cole hopes to save parents from an immediate trip to the grief section of the bookstore.

As the title implies, *Still.* is collection of artwork in addition to Cole's story of her stillborn daughter, Madeline. "The End of Pregnancy" describes the shock in finding out there was no heartbeat and the inevitable, but unthinkable, labor and delivery. In "That First Dark Year," Cole shares with us her journal until Madeline's first birthday, a year in which she conceived her second child. "That First Dark Year" begins with this wisdom:

People will tell you that time heals. Those people are liars. The pain doesn't go away, you just build up your tolerance to it. It is like lifting weights. If you try to lift five hundred pounds, it is going to crush you. But if you lift it every day of your life, it is going to get easier and easier to do, and eventually you are going to lift it without breaking a sweat. I have been carrying around five hundred pounds of sad for almost three years now, and it is still really heavy, but I do have better stamina than I did this time last year.

In a caption for her acrylic on canvas entitled "Expecting," Cole offers this insight:

I don't think most people truly understand how much is lost when a baby dies. You don't just lose a baby, you also lose the 1 and 2 and 10 and 16 year old she would have become. You lose Christmas mornings and loose teeth and first days of school. You just lose it all.

The caption for another acrylic on canvas entitled "Response to a Subsequent Pregnancy" shares

How do I feel about being pregnant again? I honestly don't know. I feel so many emotions all at once. I'm trying to believe in this little life, but I know too much this time around and I don't trust anything.

The caption for another acrylic on canvas entitled "For Madeline" states:

Though losing Madeline was the most painful experience of my life, I am still so honored to be her mother. I wish I had more time with her, but I am so grateful for every second of those 41 weeks we had together.

The book concludes with an invitation to visit The Sweet Pea Project's website www.sweetpeaproject.org where you will find a place to honor and remember "our children." The website has a list of resources that other parents have found useful as well as an online art gallery of the writings and art of other bereaved parents.

Announcements

The Gundersen-Lehman Family
welcomed a new sister to Helena Grace
who they hold in their hearts:
Gretchen Mae
arrived safely into the arms of her family
on September 6, 2011

Love Gifts

To honor your child's memory, send a "Love Gift" to Sharing Parents. A Love Gift is a monetary donation given in honor of someone or as a memorial to a baby, relative or friend. Not only will you be memorializing your baby but you will be helping Sharing Parents, which survives on donations and fundraisers. If you would like to donate a Love Gift to us, please fill out the form below. The deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is April 15, 2012.

We welcome your Love Gifts in support of Sharing Parents. A Love Gift is a monetary donation made to honor your child's memory. Please make checks payable to **Sharing Parents of Sacramento**.

(Donations to Sharing Parents are tax deductible.)

Enclose your check, attach any special message to this form and mail to:

**Sharing Parents
P.O. Box 19538
Sacramento, CA 95819-0538**

In Loving Memory of:

Date of Birth:

Date of Death/Loss:

Donor Name:

Address: