

February 2014

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 *NEW* Meeting Place

Sutter Roseville Medical Center
 1 Medical Plaza Dr.
 Roseville 95661
 Medical Bldg. 1, 2nd floor

**Our Mailing Address
 & Phone Number**

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

Upcoming Grief Support Meetings

February 9: Grieving as a Couple (Father's Breakout)
March 9: Beyond Words: The Power of Art Therapy with guest speaker, Lisa Mitchell, MA
April 13: "The Anguish of Loss"

Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings

February 23
 March 23
 April 27

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*The only people who think there's a time limit for grief, have never lost a piece of their heart.
 Take all the time you need.*

-Anonymous

2014 Sharing Parents Volunteers

Co-Presidents

Rebecca Erickson
Jennifer Stiltz

Vice President

Sharon Cox

Secretary

Jennifer Stiltz

Treasurer

Stacey Hisey

Short Term Grief Coordinator

Stacey Hisey

Sub. Pregnancy Coordinator

Molly Lawrence

Pregnancy Interruption Coordinator

Erin Greenough

Listening Line Coordinator

Molly Lawrence

Listening Line Volunteers

Sharon Cox, Lynne Genzel, Dionné Martinez

Oct. Memorial Coordinator

Sharon Cox

Community Outreach

Dionné Martinez

BUNKO Coordinator

Kristin Lunardi

March for Babies Coordinator

Trina Giacomo

Librarian

OPEN

Newsletter Editor

Rachel Libby

Webmaster

JB Cox

Facebook Moderator

Dionné Martinez

General Volunteers:

Shannon Anderson, Mildred Dela Vega, Rudy Dela Vega, Neil Genzel, Dorinda Gregory, Julie Leimbach, Deanna Lockhart, Laura McHugh, Kurt Seckington, and Ryan Stiltz

A Message from the Co-Presidents:

There are so many positive changes taking place in the perinatal grief community and also with Sharing Parents. Our Grief Support, Short Term Grief, and Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings will continue to provide peer to peer support and discussion. We realize not all methods of grief expression are completely verbal. In 2014 we are offering an introduction to some other avenues of grief exploration through additional "Quarterly Events" that might appeal to parents in all stages of their grief journey. It is our hope that we can bring parents together and foster conversation as we create Mother's and Father's Day cards for recently bereaved parents from 4-6 pm on Sunday, March 9. Similar to the October Memorial, all parents are invited to attend these Quarterly Events which means pregnant women may be in attendance. This kickoff "Card Making Event" will take place immediately before our annual Guest Speaker Grief Support Meeting. Led by art therapist, Lisa Mitchell, parents can explore their grief using art materials and discuss the experience from 7-9 pm. Our second Quarterly Event entitled "Healing the Body, Mind, and Spirit" will be led by Sharing Parents' parent, Amy Andrews. Following the March of Dimes Walk by one day, this yin yoga afternoon is an opportune time to contemplate the experience of the walk. Some parents have expressed how easy it can be to get caught up in the day to day and forget how nurturing and healing sharing our experiences with other parents can be. We hope you will join us at our Grief Support Meetings and these new Quarterly Events whether you have spent days or decades since your loss.

Rebecca and Jennifer

Remembering Our Babies With Love

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

Babies whose month of birth and anniversary of loss were not provided

Baby Adams
Baby Ahdan
Josiah Ridgeway Anderson
Baby Bailey
Baby Bansal
Baby Benevetis
Baby Boyle
Baby Brophy
James Robert Clarke
Babies Collier
Baby Ellis
Baby Fatur
Baby Garrett
Baby Gastinell
Baby Gibson
Baby Gutierrez
Baby Hanson
Baby Harmony
Baby Henry
Baby Hernandez
Baby Holloway
Baby Hom
Baby Hoshovsky
Frances Jackson
Baby Knippen
Baby Lambert
Baby Lee

Baby Marr
Baby Marrow
Baby McAnelly
Baby McCarthy
Baby McDonald
Baby McNamara
Baby Millan
Baby Millar
Baby Millerd-Baker
Baby Moreno
Baby Mosley
Baby Muldonado
Babies Pambid
Baby Pascual
Maya Lauren Penn
Baby Puckett
Baby Ramos
Baby Rasmussen
Baby Ringenberg
Baby Boy Scacco
MaKenzie Lynn Scacco
Baby Scellato
Baby Sheen
Baby Silva
Baby Snow-Schoepflin
Baby Teck
Baby Thompson

Joshua Shunk Thorne
Baby Tovar
Baby Vargas
Angel Villafán-Hermosillo
Gabriel Villafán-Hermosillo
Baby Xiong

*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*

Names are entered through the sign-in sheet at all Sharing Parents meetings.
If your baby is on this list, and you would like them included with their birth and anniversary month or months, please email sharingparents@yahoo.com

Remembering Our Babies With Love

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

FEBRUARY

February Anniversaries:

Makena Marie Elizabeth Anderson
Baby Ashton
Meagan Rene Barstone
William Evan Beebe
Baby Berger
Baby Berger
Ryan Austin Martin Bridges
John Browne
Cameraon Michael-Lee Burdick
Joshua David Cardoza
Tea Elyse Cepeda
DeOnt'e Crawford, Jr.
Weston Cruz
Colin Devey
Baby Dressen
Baby Espinoza
Baby Feuerstraeter
Baby Fraser
Andrew Gallagher
Claire Gibson
Baby Herkins
Saffi Hernandez-Christensen
Jolie Marie Hurtt
Baby Kawelo
Ericson Kelley
Sean Latham
Kaylee Ann Lindberg
Sophia Mamola
Zachary Orbus
Chancellor Aris Patton
Babies Perez
Baby Pethel
Baby Powell
Isabella Lopez Rye
Niko Shen
Madison Nicole Souza
Emily Diane Stiltz
Sophia Tolin

February Birthdays:

Faith Annalyse Alvarez
Annabelle Olivia Castablo
Claire Gibson
Brennan Jacks
Kaenan Quinn

MARCH

March Anniversaries:

Elizabeth Adame
Amelia Aitchison-Cooksy
Ruben Amen
Katherine Lynn Andrew
Kyle Benjamin Avila
Lisa Jeline Benson
Joy Kathleen Bik
Kellan Alexander Bik
Steven Kent Brown
Gracie Cahill
Caitlyn Hope Dunn Catanyag
Ethan Maxwell Cox
Joshua Michael Davidson
Babies Feuerstraeter
Magdalena Louis Frieze
Avery Graham
Baby Hall
Zoe Kaitlyn Hartzog
Baby Hernandez
Ezra Igoni White
Brennan Jacks
William Henry Jones
Madison Kristine Joppa
Baby Kaplan
Baby Keating-Frost
Eli Kuhlman
Matthew Love
Emily Loreen Meyer
Megan Oliva
Dylan Pena
Elijah James Dominique Rankin
Kaili Marie Rubitsky
Ty Scellato
Baby Belle Simmons
Baby Szillinsky
Baby Tam
Kylee Valle
Angel Michelle Vasquez
Tyler Vassion
Aria Wermund
Baby Winings

March Birthdays:

Ruben Amen
Nick Boysen
Joshua Michael Davidson
Lindsay Rose Denier
Ayiah Cherie Ricelle Harris
Ty Scellato
Sophia Shaw

APRIL

April Anniversaries:

Mia Faith Avery
Kaitlyn Badertscher
Gunner James Bigelow
Adam Joseph Bik
Hayley Maureen Bik
Robert Tenzin Bloom
Margaret Bressler
Midori Anne Briel
Mark Brittain, Jr.
Baby Chand
Elizabeth Ann Collie
Baby Crawford
Baby Davis
Sarah Helen Delp
Lindsay Rose Denier
Baby Denny
Nora Duke
Colin Frederick Foley
Baby Fosco
Babies Fremont
Oliver Martin Gensler
Ethan Harms
Kaitlyn Nicole Hart
Christopher Imbriano
Hope Kelley-Brennfleck
Rachel Kelley-Brennfleck
Baby Lang-Cannon
Hannah Joann Lawrence
Julianna Isabella Lopez
Baby Lowell
Samuel James McCoy
Baby Ocel
Kaenan Quinn
Daniel Christian Sauseda
Alejanda Sepulveda
Parys Gavin Stokes
Baby Angel Turner
Evan Vargas
Arbor Warzecha
Richard Warzecha
Reagan Ellis Westrup
Grace Woodman
Rose Zeier

April Birthdays:

Tessa Elizabeth Lockhart Ralston

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

News and Announcements

Sharing Parents Update

Dear Sharing Parents Families,

Sharing Parents is grateful to Mercy Women's Center for their years of support of our services and providing us a space to meet. The Mercy Women's Center where we were meeting closed its doors in January, prompting the need to relocate Sharing Parents. We would like to thank Sutter Roseville Medical Center for offering Sharing Parents a new home at their facility located at One Medical Plaza Drive in Roseville.

We would also like to take this time to welcome our new Sharing Parents volunteers, Mildred and Rudy Dela Vega, mommy and daddy to Elijah; Trina Giacomo, mommy to Joren; Dorinda Gregory, mommy to Cherish and Liberty; Julie Leimbach and Kurt Seckington, mommy and daddy to Everett; and Rachel Libby, mommy to Oliver.



*Our new location:
Sutter Roseville Medical Center,
1 Medical Plaza Rd, Roseville, 2nd floor*

Sharing Parents is run entirely by volunteer parents. We want everyone to be able to find a way to give back to Sharing Parents in whatever way they can. We have several upcoming events providing opportunities for you to connect with Sharing Parents families and help support Sharing Parents. March 9th from 4-6 pm we will be making cards for newly bereaved parents. All parents are welcome to attend this social event. As such, please note that there may be pregnant women present. This event will be held at the Roseville Medical Center. Sharing Parents will once again have a team for the March of Dimes March for Babies which will be held on April 26th. If you are interested in joining team Sharing Parents, please look at the message from our coordinator on page 6. Bereaved parent, Amy Andrew will be hosting a yoga workshop: *Healing the Body, Mind and Spirit Through Yoga* on April 27th from 4-6 pm. This event will also be open to all parents and there may be pregnant women in attendance. If you would like to learn more about yoga and grief, please read Amy's article on page 15.

Thank you for sharing your precious babies with us,
Sharing Parents Volunteers

To our new Sharing Parents families of these babies, our deepest sympathies for your loss

*Ryan Ahdan
Bodhi Ren Mackin
Alex Marin
Aiden James Plautz
Vanessa Rose Reade
Gabriel Rohde
Baby Angel Turner
Baby Angel Turner*

News and Announcements

Sharing Parents Update

March of Dimes March for Babies April 26, 2014

My name is Trina Giacomo and I am the March of Dimes march for babies walk coordinator for this year. The march for babies is approaching quickly. Please come join us as we walk in the loving memory of our beautiful precious babies. It will be held this year on April 26, 2014 at the State Capitol located at 1301 10th St. Sacramento CA.



95816. We will meet on the steps of the Capital facing L St. starting at 7:30 am. The walk starts promptly at 9 am and will end the same place with a lunch on the capitol lawn. I will be handing out the T-shirts to

those of you who ordered them and get a group photo done by 8:30 am at the latest. If this is the first time you are joining us you can either purchase our group shirt or come as you are. The T-shirts are all the same and will have your baby or babies name listed on the back. Every family who orders a T-shirt will have their child/children's name on the back. I personally like wearing the T-shirt in honor of my son because I can easily find other parents from the Sharing Parents team in the large crowd. It also gives my family something special to wear throughout the year in loving memory of our son/brother with his name on it. The T-shirts this year will run \$12.00 each. They come in adult sizes as well as sizes for children. If you are interested in ordering, I need to know how many you're ordering, what sizes, how you will be paying and the spelling of your child's/children's name. You can pay by Pay Pal or by check. Please send your check to Sharing Parents at PO Box and in the memo line write MOD. If paying by PayPal in the notes area, write "MOD". To assist me in making sure I get your order in on time and have the spelling right on all names please get your orders in to me by no later than Sunday, March 30, 2014 by 5 pm. You can contact me directly by e-mail at trinagiacomo@hotmail.com. Thank you and I look forward to seeing you all on Saturday April 26, 2014 as we march for our precious babies.



News and Announcements

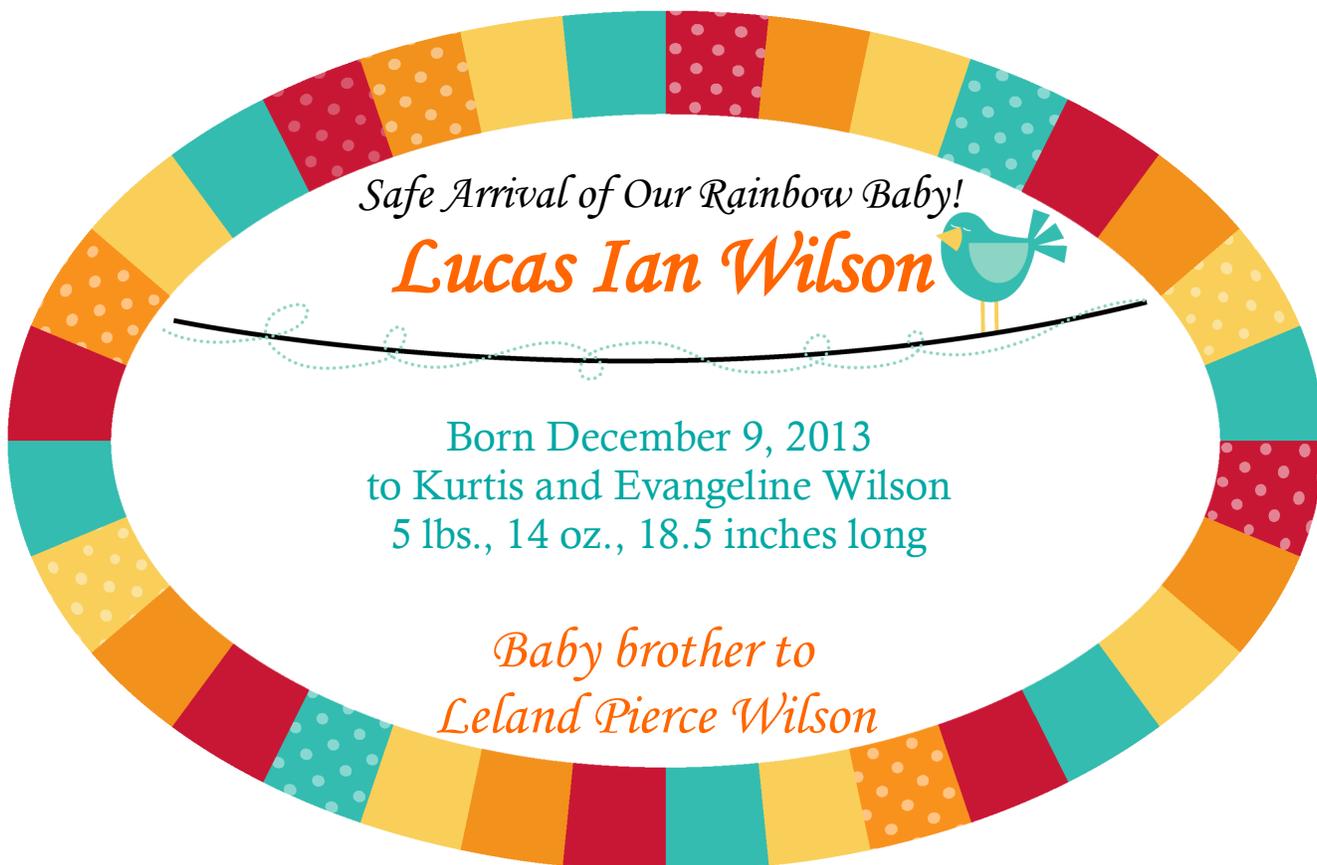


Cambria Skye Groff

Born October 7, 2013 at 1:24 pm
to Patrick and Randi Groff
8 lbs., 19 inches long

*Baby sister to
Angel Sister, Virginia Skye Groff*

*Safe
Arrival!*



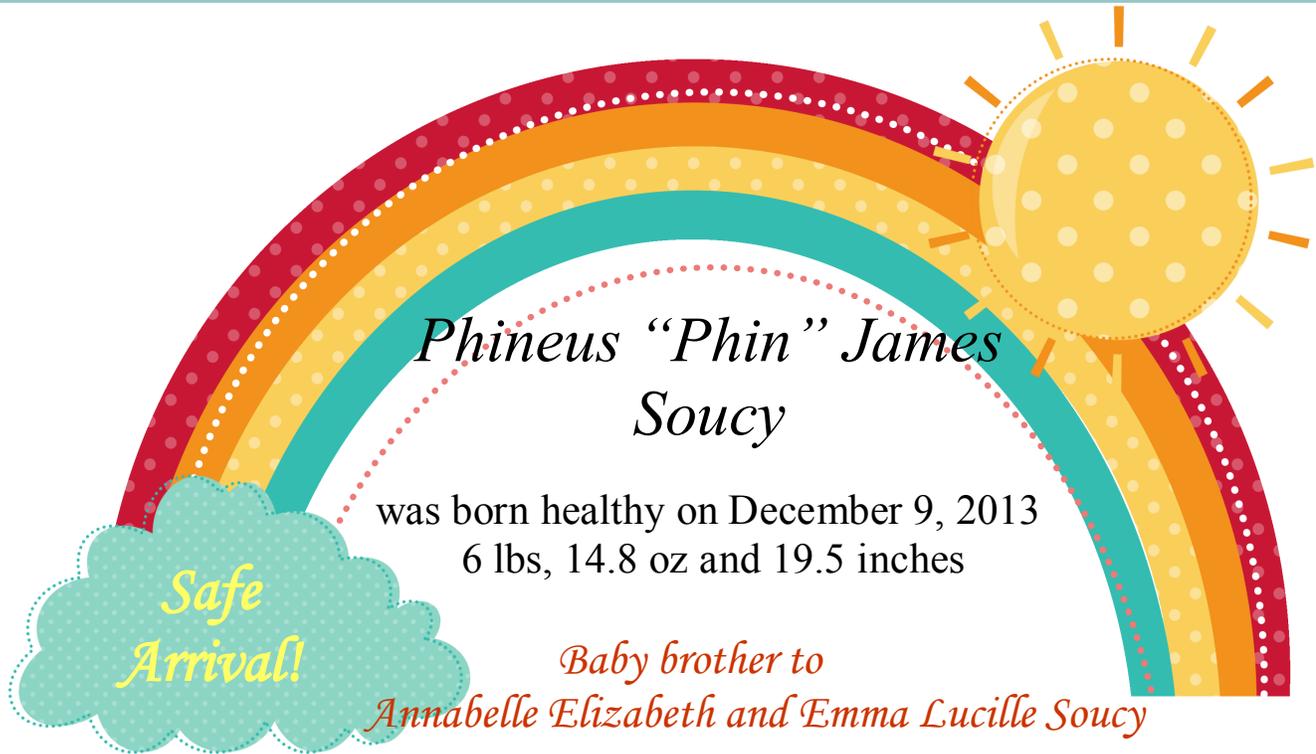
Safe Arrival of Our Rainbow Baby!

Lucas Ian Wilson

Born December 9, 2013
to Kurtis and Evangeline Wilson
5 lbs., 14 oz., 18.5 inches long

*Baby brother to
Leland Pierce Wilson*

News and Announcements



Upcoming Events:

In an effort to help continue supporting our parents, Sharing Parents will be offering additional events this year to allow parents the opportunity to further connect with parents and volunteers. We look forward to having you join us!

March 9th, 4-6pm ~ Creating Cards for Bereaved Parents: Please join some of our volunteers and Sharing Parents families for a social event to make cards for some of our newly bereaved families. All parents are welcome regardless of when your loss occurred. *Pregnant women may be present.* No experience is needed. We'll be meeting at Sutter Roseville Medical Center.

April 26th, 7:30am ~ March for Babies: Join team Sharing Parents for the March of Dimes' annual March for Babies. Bereaved parents, surviving and subsequent siblings, friends and family are all welcome to join us for the walk. We'll be meeting on the steps of the Capitol Building, facing L Street.

April 27th, 4-6pm ~ Healing the Body, Mind and Spirit Through Yoga: We hope you can join some of our volunteers and Sharing Parents families for a workshop to explore the benefits of yoga in grief. All parents are welcome regardless of when your loss occurred. *Pregnant women may be present.* No experience is needed. Please bring your yoga mat if you have one. A limited number of mats will be available for participants who need them. We'll be meeting at Sutter Roseville Medical Center.

Community Resources

It is our goal to begin a new section in the Sharing Parents newsletter which highlights one community resource each newsletter. If you would like to recommend or write up a description of a community resource that has been helpful in your grief journey, please email sharingparents@yahoo.com and put "Community Resource" in the subject line. Thank you!

Art Therapist Lisa Mitchell and the Transformative Power of Art



Sharing Parents is very excited to have Art Therapist Lisa Mitchell as our Monthly Grief Support Meeting Guest Speaker this March 9 from 7-9pm at the Sutter Roseville Medical Center, Medical Building 1. Lisa will be discussing the power of art in grief and leading participants in an art therapy exercise.

Lisa Mitchell is a licensed MFT and registered Art Therapist. She has over 20 years of experience working with a wide variety of people and problems and has "always been excited by the transformative power of art." Mitchell graduated from California State University—Sacramento with a M.S. in Counseling and Art Therapy in 1994. Nine years later, she opened The Art Therapy Studio in order to make art therapy available to a larger group of people than she was currently helping. The Art Therapy Studio is located in Fair Oaks, CA. Mitchell describes The Art Therapy Studio as "a therapeutic studio environment that is infused with the invitation to create and express" where she can "nurture and coach each client to find his/her own expressive voice in the materials." Mitchell not only helps individuals but offers CEU's for therapists wanting to learn or improve their skills using art therapy. Mitchell explains, "I bring my passion for creativity as a vital part of living and healing to all of the experiences I offer at The Art Therapy Studio."

Art therapy can be an extremely helpful way to deal with a wide range of issues. You do not need any artistic experience or talent to participate in art therapy. In a typical therapy session, there would be a brief discussion of the issue or problem being worked on, and then the participant would be invited to engage in a specially designed art activity. The art activity allows the person to remain a safe distance from a deeply painful experience while still allowing them to process the experience. Afterwards the participant is invited to verbally discuss their art experience and art work. In discussing their creation, the participant can gain insight and explore unconscious or nonverbal content revealed in the art.

The idea is that the primitive parts of our brains simply react to traumatic experiences and store them as non verbal images. If an image of an event continues to disturb a person, Lisa Mitchell offers art therapy as a creative, hands-on approach to help change a person's perspective of an event. Art therapy can allow the images to be expressed artistically and then described through words. With this new way of seeing an experience, individuals can create a whole new experience and image in the brain. The brain then has multiple images to choose from for viewing a tragedy. The original image is still there, but it doesn't have to replay and feel like the event is happening all over again in current time. Lisa Mitchell says, "When you change your way of seeing, your perspective can allow a new experience. And, forever in your brain you will have choices about how you view the awfulness."

More information on Lisa Mitchell and the transformative power of art can be found on her website at www.thearttherapystudio.com. Lisa can be contacted at (916) 276-0455 or trustart@sbcglobal.net. The Art Studio is located at 7985 Park Drive Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

Community Resources

Resources recommended by our participants...

I want to share a resource, a therapist, who is helping me in my journey. Following is my "review" of her.

~ Kristy Day

Since losing my first born at full term (Thomas William Loris Day on 10/12/06), I have struggled to find peace and happiness. Between now and then I have seen three therapists, gotten a puppy, participated in Sharing Parent's short-term grief series and general meetings, and seen a psychiatrist who continues to treat me for depression. Each has helped bring me closer to that place I long to be once again. But now I feel closer than ever with the guidance of my current therapist, Toni Horvath. She is an amazing woman with a tremendous gift. Her therapy comes from a spiritual perspective, though not in a pushy way. This approach has really worked for me, where other approaches have not. I must admit that I am more than a little surprised because I certainly didn't start my time with Toni as a spiritual person. But I don't want to say that this is all she focuses on or all that we talk about, but it was a different way of viewing my issues and struggles.

I walk away from each session feeling that I'm moving in the right direction. Toni not only listens but provides active feedback and tools to help me get to that place. She is caring, compassionate and passionate--she is simply VERY good at what she does.

For those in the market for good therapist, I highly recommend Toni Horvath, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

5330 Primrose Drive, Suite 240
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 368-6449
(916) 961-1107 fax
toni@tonihorvath.com

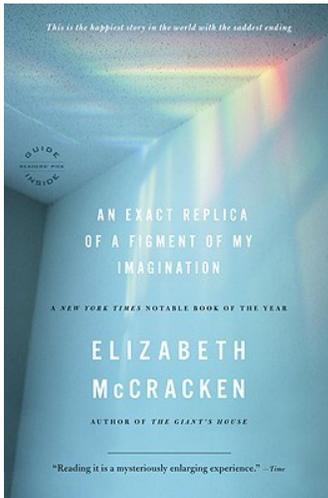
<http://www.tonihorvath.com/>

If you have found a helpful resource, please share it with us. Email sharingparents@yahoo.com and put "Newsletter resource" in the subject line. Thank you!

Poems and Articles

An excerpt from
An Exact Replica Of A Figment Of My Imagination
by Elizabeth McCracken

(reprinted with the author's permission)



Once upon a time, before I knew anything about the subject, a woman told me that I should write a book about the lighter side of losing a child.

(This is not that book.)

I was giving a badly attended fiction reading at a public library in Florida. The woman wore enormous denim shorts, a plaid shirt, a black ponytail and thumbprint-blurred glasses; her husband's nervous smile showed off his colorful teeth. They latched on to me, the way the sad and aimless sometimes do: I haven't been a public librarian myself for more than ten years now, but I retain what I like to think of as an air of civic acceptance. When the reading was over and the rest of the audience had dispersed (if five people can be said to disperse) she gave her suggestion. She really did say it, in a voice that seemed as thumbworn as her glasses: "You should write a book about the lighter side of losing a child. You're

very funny."

I couldn't imagine what she was getting at. A joke book for the bereaved? A comic strip guide to outliving your children?

For instance, she explained, her son was dead. Just recently she and Al —her husband, who smiled apologetically with those appalling choppers— had been on the beach, and Al had been eating a tuna sub, and a seagull came and stole part of the sandwich. And so she knew that the bird was the soul of her teenage son. Al nodded in agreement.

"And I laughed and laughed," the woman said flatly. I was sitting at a table, having signed three books, one for a cheerful old lady who'd called my short stories pointless during the Q & A. Al's wife had taken my place at the podium. She looked out at the empty chairs. "You should write a book with stories like that," she said. "It would be a big hit."

She was a childish, unnerving person. I imagined she'd been trying people's patience for some time. At first they would have been sympathetic, but after her son had been dead for a while, they'd grow weary of her bringing up as though the calamity had just happened. Well-meaning friends would look uncomfortable at the very mention of his name. So she had to devise new and sneaky ways to work him into conversation with strangers, at book readings, at the grocery store, at train station information desks, to telemarketers. *You have to move on*, beige toothed Al might have said, *you can't mourn forever*. Then she could say, *See? I'm not mourning. I'm laughing. I'm looking on the lighter side.*

And now she wanted an instruction book.

It seemed like the saddest thing I'd ever heard, back before I knew how sad things could get.

*

A child dies in this book: a baby. A baby is stillborn. You don't have to tell me how sad that is: it happened to me and my husband, our baby, a son.

Continued on next page

*A copy of this book was lovingly donated to the Sharing Parents library in honor of Emma Margaret Guelker
If you are interested in reading this book, please look for it in the Sharing Parents lending library.*

Poems and Articles

An excerpt from “An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination”, continued from previous page

Still, I’m coming around to understanding what that woman in Florida wanted.

A baby is born in this book, too. That is to say, a healthy baby, our second child. The first child died on April 27, 2006, in France. The second baby — a biological fact lying across my lap asleep at this very moment as I type one-handed — was born one year and five days later in Saratoga Springs, New York. Not a miracle, I insist on it. Isn’t that the headline in women’s magazines, about stories like ours? “Our Miracle Baby”? I wouldn’t have used the word *miracle* even before fate and biology and the law of averages kicked us in the teeth, back when I believed in luck, when I was a wisher on stars and white horses and pennies dropped in fountains. Those were the pastimes of my first pregnancy. This dozing infant is no miracle, no more than we had the nerve to hope for, a nice everyday baby, snoring now, the best possible thing: dreamt of, fretted over, even prayed for. A ginger-haired baby who conducts symphonies while sleeping, sighing at the dream music. (Those hands! They underscore closing arguments in dream-baby court; they hail dream-baby taxis.) We ourselves didn’t pray (our religion is worry; we performed decades of it), but some of our friends did, and the mothers of friends, and nuns on two continents, our nuns-in-law. Such a beautiful, funny-looking, monkeyish, longed for baby, exactly who we wanted to meet.

Every day as I love this baby in my lap, I think of my other baby. Poor older brother, poor missing one. I see the infant before me, the glory of the soles of the feet, the lips fattened and glossy with nursing, the nose whose future Edward and I predict daily. The love for the first magnifies the love for the second, and vice versa.

Now what I think that woman in Florida meant is: lighter things will happen to you, birds will steal your husband’s sandwich on the beach, and your child will still be dead, and your husband’s shock will still be funny, and you will spend your life trying to resolve this.

*“When you are sorrowful
look again in your heart,
and you shall see that in
truth you are weeping for that
which has been your
delight.”*

—Kahlil Gibran



@stillbornandstillbreathing.com

If you find a poem or article that is helpful to you, please consider sharing it with others in our next newsletter. Please send newsletter contributions along with the source and author of the poem or article, to sharingparents@yahoo.com with “newsletter contribution” in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is April 15th.

Parent Submissions

Feelings

by: Rachel Libby

When I started this grieving process, as I imagine most griever do, I read everything I could get my hands on. I wanted to know all I could about grieving. Mostly, I wanted to figure out how to grieve most efficiently. It was surprising to me, as I don't consider myself an over achiever by any means, but I wanted to do this thing right. (If I ever write a book on grieving, it will be titled Efficient Grieving: For Those Who Want To Grieve Right The First Time.) (I'm almost entirely serious about that.) I'm petrified at the thought of walking along three years down the road and realizing, like a sledge hammer to the stomach, that I haven't dealt with the trauma. So I read a lot. And a lot of the grieving experts said things like: be gentle with yourself, there's no wrong way to grieve, you have to let yourself feel your feelings. That last bit of obvious wisdom stuck with me. It sounds like silly advice but I figured I might as well give it a shot. And, ever the rule follower, I'm doing my best. Never in my life have I been so concerned with feeling my feelings. I feel and feel and think about feeling. All the time. Letting myself experience whatever arises and pondering it, chewing it over in my mind like a piece of gum.

For the most part, it's easy. Let myself feel sad. Certainly something I can do. It's easy to sit on my couch, wallow in this incredible loss. Easy to delve into the why why why and obsessively replay all that I wish I had done differently. It's easy to miss him, to be engulfed by longing. It's easiest to stay inside, contain myself to this house and think that life just plain shouldn't move on without Oliver. And I think to myself, who could blame me. Who in the world would judge me for shutting myself up in here, not exposing myself to the treachery that is the outside world, opening myself up to awful painful awkward encounters.

And I can even let myself feel mad. Which is rough at times, because it's definitely not my favorite feeling. I have been mad before, of course, but nothing like this. It's a disorienting feeling to be mad to your core. So mad you could punch a stranger who took your parking spot at the Savemart. This madness often opens the door to its feeling cousin, good old jealousy. It's an unattractive feeling to be sure, it doesn't look good on anyone. And, still, I let myself feel jealous. Why not, I'm surrounded by people getting exactly what I want more than anything else in the universe. Usually I'm happy for them, always I'm mad for me.

Unfortunately that's not what those airy fairy grieving instructors mean when they demand you feel your feelings. You feel quite comfortable being sad and mad when your world crumbles. Because it's so easy to be miserable. No one needs permission to be desperately unhappy when their baby dies. But, if you accept the instructions, to feel your feelings with no judgment and pressure, you have to let yourself feel the good feelings too.

Continued on next page

Parent Submissions

Continued from previous page

I remember when, mere weeks after Oliver's death, Daniel and I decided to go to Hawaii. I had no interest in going but knew Daniel did so I agreed (imagining him off snorkeling and me ordering room service in bed while watching Golden Girls, which incidentally is exactly what happened). The week before we left I sat in therapy and detailed how much I didn't want to go. How I refused to be happy about it because, after all, this is not the life we were supposed to be living. We were supposed to be taking care of a newborn, we were supposed to be exhausted and blissful, not galavanting on the beach with an umbrella-ed beverage in our hand. So I was going to go, I told my therapist, I just damn well wasn't going to be happy about it.

"But," said Carol, who always earns her money with one or two gems a session, "Everything you do from now on is something that you wouldn't be doing if Oliver lived. Are you never going to be happy about anything, ever?"

Touché, Carol, touché.

You see, the sadness, it's so easy. The happiness on the other hand, it's one tricky bugger. How can one reconcile a world where my son is dead and I'm jumping on a bed singing Call Me Maybe. It seems an impossible task.

The truth of the matter is, I have a happy life. And it hurts just a little to even put that in writing. I see joy in my future. I feel joy in my present. And it breaks my heart. I know that there are many more good times ahead, I see proof of it everyday. I let myself feel it. I let myself want it. I play. I dance. I laugh. I smile. And the worst part is, I mean it.

(Though I always, always know what's missing. My happiness now will always be qualified. I'm happy, but. But I should be happier.)

The important thing though, I reckon, is that I'm feeling it. I feel the happiness. And then I feel the complexity of guilt and desperation that inevitably follows. That happiness is fleeting, always a sharp reminder of what I've lost. Maybe someday those after feelings will fade. Or maybe they won't. Until then, I'll just be here, grieving as efficiently as I know how. Feeling my feelings as they come and go.

Parent Submissions

A Sacred Practice: Healing for the Body, Mind, and Spirit

By: Amy Andrew

The physical practice of yoga can be great for a grieving body. A gentle practice, like a restorative or “yin” class, does wonders for easing the physical symptoms of grief: tense shoulders, low back pain, a collapsed chest, and tight muscles. Stepping onto a yoga mat can be a physically healing experience for anyone, but especially for a grieving parent.

That’s not why I retreated to my mat after my daughter Katherine died at almost 24 weeks in March 2013. My heart was so broken and shattered into such tiny pieces that I hardly noticed the physical pain. The emotional pain was far more intense. There was no balance in my life—everything revolved around Kate. And me. And me not having Kate in my arms.

My yoga mat is a sacred space. It is a space without judgment from others where I can be fully honest with myself and allow my feelings to surface and be felt. It is a place where I can feel my feelings deeply without needing to explain them, justify them, or rationalize them. My mat has soaked up so many tears that it’s a wonder it ever dried out.

It is also the place I turn when I can’t put a label on what I’m feeling. Those days when I was irritated, angry, annoyed, or just “off” for a reason I couldn’t articulate were the days I was most in need of my sanctuary. My yoga practice gave me a place to be quiet and still and allowed me to listen to my inner wisdom. When I can sit with myself in stillness or move hard enough and fast enough to get out of my head, I can tap into my truth. My mat continues to give me a safe place to find answers and to physically work through the things that have no answers. It unites my mind, body, and spirit and continues to help me return balance to my life.

My yoga practice saved me. Showing up and doing the work saved me. Being aware of my feelings, accepting them, and sitting in them saved me. I have so much gratitude for yoga and the people who brought this life-changing practice into my life. My biceps don’t look half bad either.

Grief impacts the mind, body, and spirit in intense, profound, and painful ways. Yoga is well suited to deal with grief because it connects the mind, body, and spirit in a deeply personal way. If you’ve ever thought about trying yoga, I encourage you to do it. If you’re hesitant or have questions, I would be honored to guide you. Please connect with me through Sharing Parents or Facebook.

Today I dedicate my practice to Katherine Lynn Andrew, born too soon on March 22, 2013. You have been my greatest teacher and I am honored and humbled to be your mommy.

Namaste’

Amy Andrew will be leading a Yoga and Grief Workshop for Sharing Parents on April 27, 2014 from 4-6pm at Sutter Roseville Medical Center. We hope you can join her and experience yoga as a tool to help you through your grief journey.

For some, writing about their grief can be therapeutic. Please consider sharing 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 15th.

Librarian's Corner

Book Reviews

A Book Review

by Jennifer Stiltz

"I have learned that grief is a dance. I do it rather clumsily much of the time, but as it turns out, I am in good company. Others who have lost children have shared the inability to separate the sorrow from the joy in life. I find that they are inextricably woven, never to be pulled fully from each other in this life." (page 182)

In her book, *I Will Carry You the Sacred Dance of Grief and Joy*, Angie Smith describes her faith and how it helped her through the decision to carry a baby deemed incompatible with life, carry this baby for fourteen weeks, and deliver her, and say goodbye. Throughout the book, Angie explains her desire to glorify her God (as difficult as that may be at times) while grieving deeply the loss of her daughter, Audrey Caroline. The book speaks to reconcile the all too common belief that grief portrays of weakness in one's faith. "One of the common veins [of women with losses] is the feeling that they have to 'move on', 'get over it', 'appreciate what they have', and similar suggestions. I can tell you as a mother who has experienced losing a baby: it isn't going to happen. Grief is a winding, nasty road that has no predictable course...you cannot rush grief." (page 166) Despite her conviction that her daughter is healed and happy, in the safety of her God, there is pain and grief. "...I would be lying if I said that when I sit in my sewing room staring at the bloodstains on the collar of her little dress, I am immediately filled with peace because I know where she is. I am not. I want her here with me, and on many nights that truth has failed to fill the void. I have beaten myself up many times, wondering why I was moping around when she was perfectly happy. What kind of Christian does that? The answer is pretty simple actually. One who is human." (page 173)

"Part of my purpose in this life is to be Audrey's voice, and I do this with great pride and a tremendous amount of prayer. I wish she had lived. I would be lying if I said I am always at peace with the way things turned out. I am also learning how to separate what I feel from the One I serve, and the distinction is where the beauty of life is able to return." (page 156)

While there are strong overtones of her faith throughout the entire book, the story of her loss and grief will resonate with bereaved parents regardless of whether they share her beliefs. Angie was 18 weeks pregnant when she was told her daughter would be incompatible with life. Faced with two impossible decisions, she decided to continue to carry her baby. She and her family filled the 14 weeks they had with Audrey to fit in as many memories as possible. "He may give us today with her, or He may give us the rest of our lives. Either way, we are going to be purposeful, and we are going to live it to the fullest. She is our child, and we are going to love her with the same intensity we love our other girls. It is all we have." (page 25) That is not to say that there was only joy in making those memories. Joy and grief coexisted. "I have a master's degree in psychology and I know the steps of grief. They look great on paper along with all the multiple-choice questions, but in reality they aren't that simple. They jump back and forth at a pace that is completely unpredictable." (page 151)

"I can distinctly remember the way grief and joy danced together as if they had a right to." (page 31)

Chapter 14, "Burden Carriers" is full of tips for friends and family to help parents carry this burden. "Many people have asked me how they can help...many have asked what they should avoid doing. I know that everyone deals with grief differently, but one of the things that meant the world to me was that people acknowledged that we had lost her. It is really awkward...to see someone who knows what happened but doesn't say anything. ...When it didn't come up, I felt like she wasn't real. I wanted her to be acknowledged. Regardless of whether the loss is an early term miscarriage or the loss of a child, this was a life that had been entrusted to me as a parent, and I wanted her to be recognized." (page 164) Other tips in this chapter include helping out with seemingly small tasks which could be tremendously helpful during this time.

With a background in psychology, Angie was able to help her three living daughters understand the loss and offers an appendix with information on helping children who are grieving in this book.

Continued on next page

Librarian's Corner

Book Reviews

Continued from previous page...

Angie's husband, Todd Smith, lead singer of the group *Selah*, included the lyrics to Audrey's song, *I Will Carry You* in the book. He also wrote an appendix with his thoughts and perspective regarding their loss of Audrey, acknowledging that men and women grieve differently. "For fathers like me, there is no certain way to grieve. We all do it differently, and you don't need to feel guilty because you cry less. It doesn't mean you don't love your child." (page 195)

This is a heart-wrenching story of loss, but it is also a story of love and faith. It is the story of Audrey Caroline and the joy that her family found in the midst of their sorrow, "the sacred dance of grief and joy".

"The grieving process would hit me suddenly. It has never been consistent or predictable."

*~ Todd Smith
(page 195)*

Two copies of this book were lovingly donated to the Sharing Parents library by Kurtis and Evangeline Wilson in loving memory of their son, Leland Pierce Wilson.

If you are interested in reading this book, please look for it in the Sharing Parents lending library.

If you have read a book that you've found helpful on your grief journey, please consider submitting a book review. Please send book reviews to sharingparents@yahoo.com with "book review" in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is April 15th.

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, 2014**.

In loving memory of

Baby Emma Margaret Guelker

*With love from
Grandma and Grandpa*

*In loving memory of
Katherine Lynn Andrew
March 22, 2013*

In a year's time, you've opened our hearts and shown us the path we were meant to walk. You've been our greatest teacher and brought so much love to our lives. Your footprints were tiny but your impact was profound and everlasting. Our family wouldn't be complete without you, even as we've come to accept that your place is not in our arms. We love you so much Katie-Bug and we're honored to be your mommy, daddy, and big sister.

Amy, Tom & Emily Andrew

In loving memory of

Leland Pierce Wilson

"October"

Anonymous

*Softly the leaves of memory fall
Gently we gather and treasure them all
Unseen, unheard you are always near,
So missed, so loved, so very dear
No longer in our lives to share,
But in our hearts you're always there*

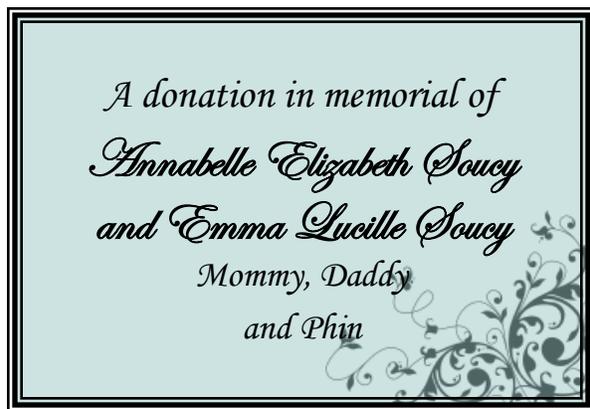
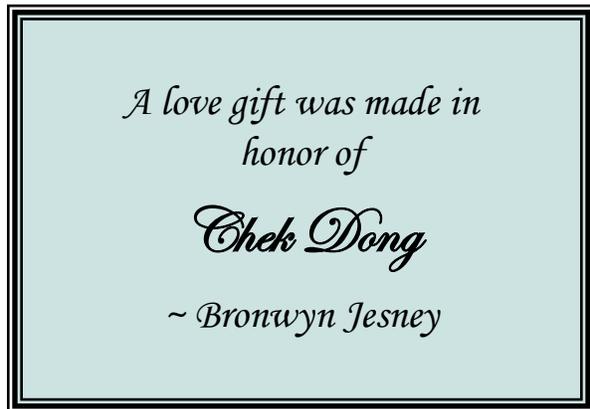
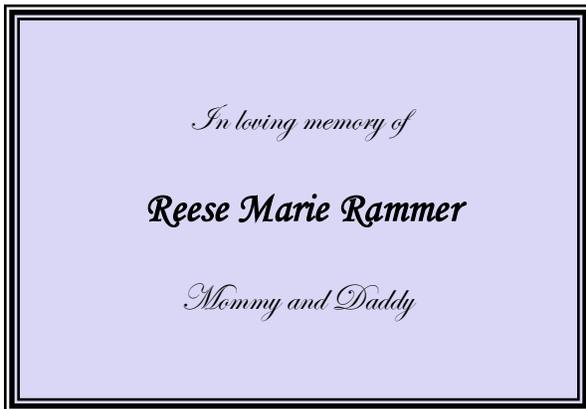
*We love and miss you always, Leland
Mommy and Daddy*

In loving memory of

Emily Diane Stiltz

*We love and miss you!
Grandma and Grandpa*

Love Gifts



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:

Message:

Donor Name:

Address: