

May 2013

**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**

**May 5\***: Mother's Day

**June 9**: Father's Day

**July 14**: Friends and Family

\* first Sunday of the month

**Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings**

May 26, June 23, July 28

**Inside this issue:**

Message from the President.....2  
Remembering our Babies.....3  
News and Announcements.....5  
Community Resources.....8  
Poems and Articles.....10  
Parent Submissions.....17  
Librarian's Corner.....18  
Love Gifts.....20

*Motherhood is a state of both the mind and the heart,  
a sacred place that is yours no matter the distance between you  
and your child. Not even death can take it away.*

~Joanne Cacciatore



### 2013 Sharing Parents Volunteers

#### President

Rebecca Erickson

#### Vice President

Stacey Hisey

#### Secretary

Jennifer Stiltz

#### Treasurer

Ken Hisey

#### Past President

Deanna Lockhart

#### Short Term Grief Coordinator

Stacey Hisey

#### Sub. Pregnancy Coordinators

Lynne Genzel, Neil Genzel,  
Molly Lawrence

#### Pregnancy Interruption Coordinator

Erin Greenough

#### Listening Line Coordinator

Lynne Genzel

#### Listening Line Volunteers

Molly Lawrence

#### Oct. Memorial Coordinator

Ellen Litle

#### Community Outreach

OPEN

#### Event/Fundraiser Coordinator

OPEN

#### Librarian

Dionné Martinez

#### Newsletter Editor

Jennifer Stiltz

#### Newsletter Assistant

OPEN

#### Webmaster

Ken Hisey

#### General Volunteers:

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Molly Lawrence, Kristin Lunardi,  
Laura McHugh, Ryan Stiltz,  
Tzeli Triantafillou

## Mother's Day. Father's Day. *And friends and family.*

The months of May and June can bring some challenging days for parents of dead babies. Some of us may desperately want to be recognized by others as the parent we are—even if our only child is dead. We may need our family and friends to recognize us as parents, our dead babies as children, our pain as real, and our grief as legitimate. Those of us with living parents may feel obligated to recognize our parents on these holidays. But what if our parents don't recognize us as parents? And if one or both of our parents are dead, our grief can be further multiplied on these holidays.

Others of us might want to ignore the holiday altogether and pretend it doesn't exist. This was my experience. On the first Mother's Day after losing my stillborn daughter, I boycotted Mother's Day. I was mad at the world and spent the day, alone, gardening—a desperate attempt to be in control of life and nature. What I needed was time to myself; time to grieve; time to protest a loss that went against the natural order. Parents are supposed to die before children. Not the reverse. Babies are NOT supposed to die. Even though I had a living child, I didn't have my baby girl with me, and there seemed to be nothing to celebrate.

Holidays such as Mother's Day and Father's Day can magnify other people's perceptions of our losses and bring up difficult issues with friends and family. There are many misconceptions people tend to have about pregnancy and early infant loss. People tend to think that the length of time the child lived inside or outside the womb determines the intensity of the loss and the depth of grief experienced. Well intentioned, they might say, "at least it happened early." Words such as "you can always have another" imply that children are replaceable, that having another child will take away the pain of the loss. We may be left wanting to scream: **We want the baby or babies we lost! We wish we had them longer!**

Everyone at Sharing Parents meetings has had a pregnancy or infant loss. If you would like to come share with people who understand, our upcoming General Meetings will be focusing on the topics of "Mother's Day" (May 5<sup>th</sup>), "Father's Day" (June 9), and "Friends and Family" (July 14). We hope you can join us regardless of how long ago your loss may have occurred.

Rebecca Erickson, President

# Remembering Our Babies With Love

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

## MAY

### May Anniversaries:

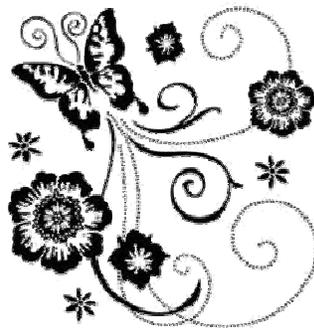
Pedro Adame  
Faith Annalyse Alvarez  
Taylor Reese Bacon  
Caleb Michael Brown  
Emelia Bunrs  
Baby Camarena  
Grace Marie Canady  
Michael Enrique Canales  
Madeleine Joy Canimo  
Annabelle Olivia Castablo  
Baby Chambers  
Jack Thomas Clauer  
Johnathan Constantine  
Baby Crawford  
Baby Crawford  
Baby Crawford  
Benjamin Dirish  
Franklin Dirish Jr.  
Chek Dong  
Samantha Emery  
Michael Estada  
Baby Gabrielle  
Millie Rose Genzel  
Timothy W. Gergen, Jr.  
Timothy William Grgen  
Ayiah Cherie Ricelle Harris  
Brady Herrington  
Klayton Javon Hooper  
Baby Jensen  
Kadance Lyric Kaplan-Samuels  
Gavin Kalani Kawelo  
Kieran Kojima-Black  
Baby Krebs  
Baby Lang-Cannon  
Bjorn Erik Law  
Everett Leimbach-Seckington  
Grace Lindeman  
Paul Lintz  
Sarah Lintz  
Pedro Jose Lopez  
Nicholas Lunardi

### May Anniversaries:

Wyatt Andrew Nowicki  
Mark O'Brien Jr.  
Baby Pethel  
Matthew Provost  
Reese Rammer  
Santia Sargeant  
Baby Schmidt  
Maria Elizabeth Schubert  
Sophia Shaw  
Joshua Zane Shunk  
Ashley Grace Sisson  
Babies Small  
Sidney Marie Smith  
Baby Smith  
Rebecca Grace Spangler  
Gavin Thomas Stamm  
Baby Tan  
Sophie Tye  
Jacob Zaretsky

### May Birthdays:

Taylor Reese Bacon  
Payton Hadley Bazzocco  
Shelby Jean Isola  
Charlie Kingston  
Kieran Kojima-Black



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

## JUNE

### June Anniversaries:

Brady Ryan Adam  
Isabella Adams  
Andrew Bond dos Reis  
Mateo Marcos Bravo  
Crystal Campbell  
Matthew Cleaves  
Baby Cromeenes  
Baby Cruz  
Jordan William Davidson  
Annabelle Dorothy Day  
Hannah Noel Drews  
Olivia Fillion  
Erin Leigh Fink  
Jacob Fink  
Baby Fisk  
Jasmine Allan Ford  
Isac Dailon Goldman  
Zackary Herkins  
Jack Franklin Hisey  
Julian Jackson  
Timothy John Kilkelly  
Baby Latino  
Baby Legrand  
Baby Levy  
Selma Livadic  
Tessa Elizabeth Lockhart Ralston  
Baby Lopez  
Puter Martinez-Gardner  
Baby McCornell  
Leo Davies Melbourne  
Elijah Loren Meyer  
Derrick Morgan  
Wyatt Andrew Nowicki  
Ethan Michael Peters  
Sara Lopez Rye  
Justin Michael Sanders  
Isaac Anthony Sheff  
Baby Shields  
Olivia Catherine Smith  
Summer Olivia Sprenger  
Noah Joshua Sung  
Maverick Thompson

### June Birthdays:

Annabelle Dorothy Day  
Ethan Michael Peters

# Remembering Our Babies With Love

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

## JULY

### July Anniversaries:

Maurice Adams-Steptoe  
Makena Marie Elizabeth Anderson  
Baby Beck  
Baby Binns  
Kaleb Julius Bracy  
Baby Bracy  
Jacob Tremblay Casale  
Leah Grace Clavel  
Brian Cleaves  
Baby Davis  
Kaleb Reyes Delacruz  
Tavares Epps  
Michael Farquhar  
Peanut Fong  
Babies Ford  
Baby Fosco  
Spartacus Gone  
Emma Margaret Guelker  
Helena Grace Gundersen-Lehman  
Christian Higa  
Baby Hinson  
Hayden Matthew Hope  
Hunter Aaron Hope  
Sarah Leigh Howitson  
Shelby Jean Isola  
Terrence Brophy Jett  
Charlie Kingston  
Audrey Elise Krater

### July Anniversaries:

Quincy Leonard  
Colton James Long  
Valerie June Lozano  
Travis Adrian Maheras  
Joslyn Isabel McBroom  
Leo Davies Melbourne  
Baby Peterson  
Baby Peanut Riemer  
Baby Boy Rouse  
Andrew Shaw  
Baby Siino  
Olivia Arabella Sillion  
Livia Darling Somera  
Emma Lucille Soucy  
Annabelle Elizabeth Soucy  
Baby Sperry  
Baby Szillinsky  
Andrea Grace Teixeira  
Joaquin Victor Torrence  
Taylor Javon Lee Wilson

### July Birthdays:

Thaddeus Lawrence Birdtail  
Tea Elyse Cepeda  
Brian Cleaves  
Sarah Helen Delp  
John Zander Jones III  
Zaia K'lea Marquez



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

# News and Announcements

## Sharing Parents Update

Dear Sharing Parents Families,

A huge thank you to all the parents who joined some of our Sharing Parents volunteers at the March of Dimes, March for Babies on April 27th! It is such an honor to walk with you in memory of all of our babies. Special thanks to our volunteer, Shannon Anderson, for organizing team Sharing Parents and taking care of designing and ordering the team shirts.



*2013 Team Sharing Parents at the Sacramento March for Babies*

We marched in memory of the twenty-four babies listed on this year's t-shirts as well as all Sharing Parents babies that we forever carry in our hearts.

The walk passed through downtown Sacramento, Old Town Sacramento and also passed by the beautiful Capitol Park Rose Garden which will be the location of our annual memorial to honor our babies.



*Capitol Park Rose Garden*

Please mark your calendars for our 27th Annual October Memorial which will be held on Sunday, October 13, 2013 from 3:30-5:30 at the Capitol Park Rose Garden on 15th and L Street. This is a lovely time to come together and remember our babies. There will be a dove release, music, speakers, and an open microphone time for those wishing to share a story or poem. Everyone will also have the opportunity to speak their baby(ies) name(s). Butterflies can be ordered to release after the ceremony. Please look for the order form in this newsletter or online at [www.sharingparents.org](http://www.sharingparents.org). Butterflies must be ordered by August 25th.



*2013 Team Sharing Parents t-shirt remembering 24 babies*

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

# News and Announcements



## 27<sup>th</sup> Annual October Memorial

Sunday, October 13, 2013

at the Capitol Park Rose Garden at 3:30pm

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### Butterfly Release Form

At the October Memorial there will be a time for parents, family and friends to release butterfly(ies) in honor of their baby(ies).

Orders and payment **must** be received by **August 25, 2013** in order for your butterfly(ies) order to be placed.

The cost is **\$20.00 per butterfly**.

You may visit our website at [www.sharingparents.org/events.htm](http://www.sharingparents.org/events.htm) to place and pay for your butterfly order via the Sharing Parents Pay Pal account.

OR

Please include this form along with your check when you mail in your order.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to release \_\_\_\_\_ butterfly(ies)

Check total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Sharing Parents**

Mail completed order form and payment to:

**Sharing Parents**  
**PO Box 19538**  
**Sacramento, CA 95819**



# News and Announcements

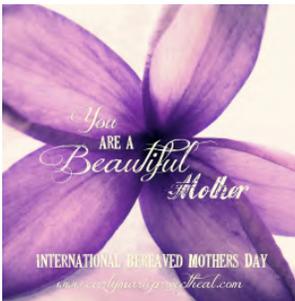
Sharing Parents was invited to speak on the *Hope, Healing and Help Radio*, KFIA 710 AM radio show hosted by Ron Harder on March 16th. This radio show airs weekly on Saturdays and is aimed at helping people through their experiences of loss and grief by offering advice and insight from professionals and others in the community who have been touched by grief.

Sharing Parents President, Rebecca, and Past President, Deanna gave an interview on “Perinatal Grief and Sharing Parents”, providing listeners with a description of the services offered by Sharing Parents, and why these services are so valuable. They were also able to discuss some common misconceptions about the length of time a parents experiences grief, and some misconceptions surrounding a subsequent pregnancy after the loss of a baby. Thank you, Rebecca and Deanna for helping to let others know that there is support available to help them in their grief journey in a caring environment of other bereaved parents.



If you missed the originally airing, the program can be found on the Hope, Healing and Help Radio website at [www.hopehealinghelp.com](http://www.hopehealinghelp.com) under the “Program Archive” link at the bottom of the homepage.

## *May 5th is International Bereaved Mother's Day*



*It is a day to honor all mothers and to celebrate the connection between a mother and her children and to remember and honor the babies who are carried in our hearts.*

*For more information, visit the Carly Marie Project Heal blog or Facebook page.*

*[www.carlymarieprojectheal.com](http://www.carlymarieprojectheal.com) (look under the International Days tab)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/International-Bereaved-Mothers-Day/205653979495449](https://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Bereaved-Mothers-Day/205653979495449)*

*To our new Sharing Parents families of these babies, our deepest sympathies for your loss(es)*



*Ruben Amen  
Katherine Lynn Andrew  
Ava Gabrielle Barnett  
Gunner James Bigelow  
Baby Donaghy  
Baby Donaghy  
Ezra Igoni White  
Baby Payne  
Jane Belle Rodriguez*

# 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](mailto:sharingparents@yahoo.com) and put "Community Resource" in the subject line. Thank you!



*Bereaved Parents*  
of the USA



*We, as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives following the death of a child.*

Bereaved Parents of the USA is a self-help group offering support, understanding, compassion and hope. It is open to all parents, grandparents and siblings who have lost a child, grandchild or sibling regardless of the age or circumstances surrounding the loss. Bereaved Parents of the USA also strives to help educate families about the grief process and its complexities related to the loss of a child. The local chapter is the Sacramento-Placer County Chapter which meets on the 1st Thursday of each month.

As part of their services, Bereaved Parents of the USA hosts an annual National Gathering where parents from around the nation can come hear inspirational speakers, attend workshops and participate in sharing sessions, as well as connect with other bereaved families. This year the National Gathering is hosted by the Sacramento-Placer County Chapter and will be held at the Sacramento Lions Gate Hotel and Conference Center July 26-28th. The theme is *Golden Nuggets of Hope*. Sharing Parents president, Rebecca Erickson has been asked to participate in this year's Gathering as one of their speakers. In addition to the speakers, workshops and sharing sessions, there will also be a candle lighting ceremony and slide show.

If you are interested in attending the conference, you can register online at <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/Gathering.html>. If you would like more information about the National Gathering, you can contact one of the Bereaved Parents of the USA Leadership team members by emailing [The2013Gathering@gmail.com](mailto:The2013Gathering@gmail.com). The flyer for the 2013 National Gathering has been included in this newsletter. If you would like more information about the Bereaved Parents of the USA, please browse their national website at [www.BereavedParentsUSA.org](http://www.BereavedParentsUSA.org).

# Community Resources

## Golden Nuggets of Hope



**2013 National Gathering for the  
Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Sacramento, California  
July 25 - 28, 2013**

Hosted by the  
Sacramento-Placer County Chapter of the  
Bereaved Parents of the USA

[The2013Gathering@Gmail.com](mailto:The2013Gathering@Gmail.com)

- ♥ Mark your calendar ♥
- ♥ Save the date ♥
- ♥ Start planning now ♥

Spend time with friends and family as we celebrate our Angels gone too soon and find NUGGETS OF HOPE for the grief journey. You'll hear inspirational speakers and be given the opportunity to attend informative workshops that will give you tools to help you navigate the journey of grief. The famous Lions Gate Chef is planning a fabulous and affordable menu for us to enjoy as we relax together during meals.

Many people who attend the annual Gatherings feel like they are on vacation with their Angels. They plan their yearly vacation around the Gathering and look forward to it all year long.

The 2013 Gathering has a great committee that is already working very hard to ensure that you have an experience you won't soon forget.

- ♥ Mark your calendar ♥
- ♥ Save the date ♥
- ♥ Start planning now ♥

The Lions Gate Hotel & Conference Center has given us a special room rate of \$89 per night, which includes free breakfast and free shuttle service to and from the airport. They have extended this rate for up to 3 days before and 3 days after the Gathering. ([www.lionsgatehotel.com](http://www.lionsgatehotel.com))

If you decide to take advantage of this price and extend your stay here in the heart of Gold Country, you may want to visit some of the wonderful attractions that draw folks to Northern California, such as:  
Lake Tahoe, Lake Shasta, San Francisco, Yosemite National Park, Napa Valley and Calistoga Wine Country, the fabulous Redwoods, Six Flags, Sacramento Zoo, Thunder Valley Casino, the State Capital, the popular Train & Aeronautical Museums, Old town Folsom, Coloma (where gold was discovered), Sutter's Fort, white water rafting, and so much more...  
[www.VisitCalifornia.com](http://www.VisitCalifornia.com)

# Poems and Articles

Dear Mr. Hallmark,

I am writing to you from heaven,  
and though it must appear

A rather strange idea,  
I see everything from here.

I just popped in to visit,  
your stores to find a card

A card of love for my mother,  
as this day for her is hard.

There must be some mistake I thought,  
every card you could imagine

Except I could not find a card,  
from a child who lives in heaven.

She is still a mother too,  
no matter where I reside

I had to leave, she understands,  
but oh the tears she's cried.

I thought that if I wrote you,  
that you would come to know

That though I live in heaven now,  
I still love my mother so.

She talks with me, and dreams with me;  
we still share laughter too,

Memories our way of speaking now,  
would you see what you could do?

My mother carries me in her heart,  
her tears she hides from sight.

She writes poems to honor me,  
sometimes far into the night

She plants flowers in my garden,  
there my living memory dwells

She writes to other grieving parents,  
trying to ease their pain as well.

So you see Mr. Hallmark,  
though I no longer live on earth

I must find a way,  
to remind her of her wondrous worth

She needs to be honored,  
and remembered too

Just as the children of earth will do.

Thank you Mr. Hallmark,  
I know you'll do your best

I have done all I can do;  
to you I'll leave the rest.

Find a way to tell her,  
how much she means to me

Until I can do it for myself,  
when she joins me in eternity.

JODY SEILHEIMER

# Poems and Articles

## Being the Mother of a Child Who Died -- On Mother's Day

By Claire McCarthy, M.D., Pediatrician, Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

Posted: 05/12/2012 10:41 am

I am the mother of a child who died. And that makes Mother's Day very hard.

Recently I was talking to a mother whose child had just died. "What about Mother's Day?" she asked, through tears. It was hard to know what to say, because it's a terrible day for those of us who have lost a child. Other days of the year you can maybe make it a few hours without thinking about your loss; other days of the year you can pretend that you are an ordinary person and that life is normal. But not on Mother's Day.

On Mother's Day it's in your face that your child is gone forever. On Mother's Day you can't pretend you are ordinary or that life is normal. All the hoopla, all the Hallmark hype, the handmade cards and flowers and family gatherings, make it almost excruciating.

Our town has a Mother's Day road race for which I am eternally grateful -- especially because, in a demonstration of grace's existence, the start and finish are next to the cemetery where my son is buried. On my way I can visit his grave and say what I need to say and look yet again at the name we chose for him carved into stone. At the end of the race, they give all the mothers a flower; on my way home, I go back to the grave and lay my flower there. And then I move forward with the day.

See, that's the real challenge after losing a child: moving forward. It's almost impossible to envision in that moment of loss; how can life continue after something so horrible? But life does continue, whether we like it or not. There are chores to do and bills to pay; morning comes, again and again. So you pick yourself up and you live, but you are never the same.

At first, we are different because of our raw sadness. But over time, the sadness moves from our skin into our bones. It becomes less visible, but no less who we are. It changes into a wisdom, one we'd give up in a heartbeat to have our child back. We who have lost children understand life's fragility and beauty. We who have lost children understand that so many things just aren't important. All that is important is those we love. All that is important is each other. Nothing else.

It can feel very lonely, being the parent of a child who died. Especially on Mother's Day or Father's Day. We feel so different from those around us, all those happy people with children the same age our child was, or would have been. But over the years, I've come to understand that I'm not alone at all.

There is a wonderful Buddhist story about a woman whose son gets sick and dies. She goes to the Buddha to ask him to bring her son back to life; I will, he says, if you bring me some mustard seed from the home of a family that has not known loss. She goes from house to house but can find no family that has not lost someone dear to them. She buries her son and goes to the Buddha and says: I understand now.

That is what I understand now. It doesn't make me miss my son any less, or Mother's Day any easier. But it helps me make sense of it; loss is part of life. There are no guarantees, ever. Our children, and all those we love, are gifts to us for however long we have them.

I understand now too that we are together in this, all of us, in joy and in loss. It's the connections we make with each other that matter -- it's the connections we make that give life value and help us face each morning. As G.K. Chesterton wrote, "We are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty."

Years ago, I chose words to say each time I go to my son's grave. It makes it easier to have a ritual. And over the years, the words have come to mean more to me. They aren't just about about grief anymore. They are about who I am, what I have learned, and what I can give.

"I will always love you," I say. "And I will always be your mother."

# Poems and Articles

## Mother's Day--Am I A Mother?

Written by Clara Hinton | Feb 23, 2002  
<http://www.silentgrief.com>

Holidays following child loss can become dreaded events. Stores and shopping malls are filled with darling stuffed teddy bears, flowers, candies, balloons, and colorful decorations to serve as reminders of the coming holiday event. But, when a child has died, one's perspective changes dramatically. One of the worst holidays to face following child loss is Mother's Day.

A woman struggles with a very basic question when early loss occurs such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, or still-birth. Women who have given their child up for adoption struggle with this same question. Am I a mother?

Am I a mother? When there is no child to hold, no child visible to others, this question is one that pains the innermost depths of the heart. Mother's Day is especially difficult because there are such things as new baby dedications done in churches, mother-daughter banquets planned, and flowers designed just for mothers. A woman who does not have her physical child with her often agonizes over what to do and what to say to others.

Even if your baby lived one day inside of you, you are still a mother! Your body was "with child"; therefore, in a very real sense you are a genuine mother. That is special, and worthy of recognition. It is extremely important to give validity to the fact that you wear the cherished name "mother". Am I a mother? Yes!

Sadly, many of our churches do not recognize mothers of miscarriage and other early child loss. I don't believe this is an intentional oversight. I believe it stems from a lack of understanding and a general feeling of not knowing what to say or do in an uncomfortable situation.

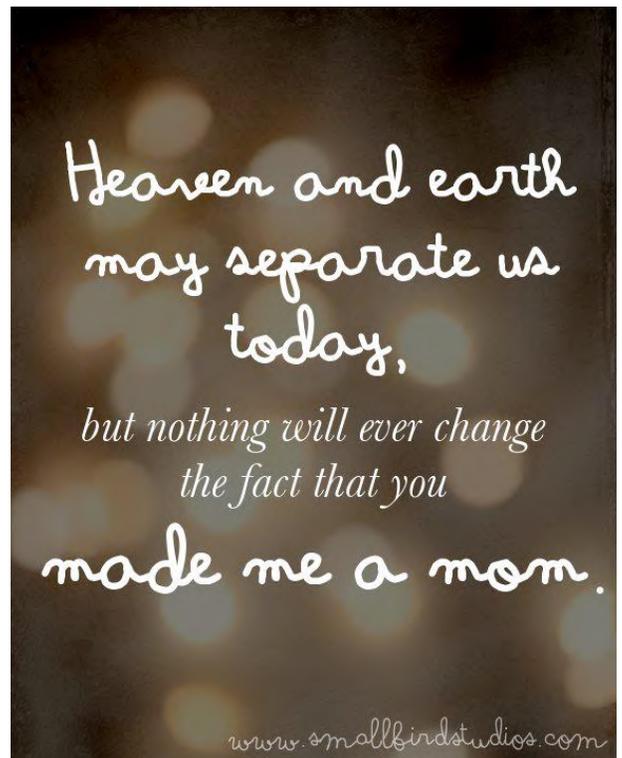
Card companies also are lacking in the careful wording of cards for mothers who have experienced miscarriage and early child loss. Often, even those closest to you will overlook you in the celebration of Mother's Day. In fact, there may be some who would think you are not accepting the loss if you want to celebrate Mother's Day in some way.

What are you to do? Follow your heart. If you feel it is important for you to be recognized as a mother, then let others know of your wishes. Tell your pastor that you would like mention made of your baby, too, on dedication Sunday. Perhaps this would be a wonderful time for you to name your baby, if you have not done so already. Giving a baby a name is very healing.

Tell others that you would enjoy flowers, or that you would love a donation made to your favorite charity in honor of your baby for Mother's Day. Wear a flower on Mother's Day, or choose something that has special significance to you such as a bracelet to wear in honor of your baby. This will give you a connection to your baby, and allow you to feel like you are a mother.

Yes. You are a mother, and that means that Mother's Day is for you, too. Hold that day close to your heart by honoring your child's birth and death. Grieve the loss, but remember your baby. And, by all means, allow yourself the privilege of being called mother.

When you validate the fact that you indeed are a mother, you are moving one more step forward in your journey of grief towards healing.



# Poems and Articles

~~ A poem for Fathers ~~  
*by Eileen Knight Hagemeister*

It must be very difficult

To be a man in grief,  
Since "men don't cry"  
and "men are strong"  
No tears can bring relief.

It must be very difficult  
To stand up to the test,  
And field the calls and visitors  
So she can get some rest.

They always ask if she's all right  
And what she's going through.  
But seldom take his hand and ask,  
"My friend, but how are you?"

He hears her crying in the night  
And thinks his heart will break.  
He dries her tears and comforts her,  
But "stays strong" for her sake.

It must be very difficult  
To start each day anew.  
And try to be so very brave-  
He lost his baby too.



# Poems and Articles

## Journey Towards Father's Day

*Written by:* Kelly D. Farley  
Posted on June 12, 2011 by GrievingDads  
<http://www.grievingdads.wordpress.com>

### A Journey Towards Father's Day

It's that time of year again, a time for renewal. It's time to say goodbye to the dark, gray, cold days of winter and hello to spring. In late February/early March I start to search desperately for the first signs of hope; hope that spring is right around the corner. The first Winter Crocus to peak through the ground or spotting the first Robin after a long winter is a welcoming sign that winter is leaving ever so slowly. By the end of March, the days become a little longer and a little brighter, bringing with it new growth and color. I love the smell of spring in the air, the beautiful spring flowers, fresh cut grass and the sound of a spring thunderstorm washing away the winter gray.

However, for me, the excitement of spring turns to uneasy anticipation in April as I face a series of dates I don't really want to deal with. The days of naively enjoying the spring are gone, they have been gone since the spring of 2004. Can't I just enjoy the spring for what it is? Unfortunately, the answer to that questions is "no".

With the arrival of April comes Easter and the reminders; the reminders that my daughter Katie and my son Noah are not here. No Easter dress for my sweet Katie and no smiles on Noah's face as he finds the Easter eggs hidden around the yard. I was never fortunate enough to have experienced these events with my children before they died, but they do play out in my head as to the "what if" and "what should have been". I keep most of these thoughts to myself and don't really say much about them to anyone else. I don't want to upset my wife by saying them out loud, even though I am sure she is thinking the same things I am during this time.

Late April brings Katie's original due date. This year would have been her fifth birthday. As we do every year on her due date, we order a cake, sing her Happy Birthday and blow out the candles. Then we head to the park to release balloons and watch them until they disappear. Some would think this is a sad and depressing way to remember your child's birthday. But for me, it isn't, it's my way to let her know that I love her and I miss her and look forward to the day of holding her in my arms.

I am sure that many of the people that know my wife and I think we should just move on, to let her go, but I really don't take much stock in what they think because it wouldn't be fair of me to ask them to understand. How could they unless they themselves have lost a child?

The month of May brings another uneasy day, Mother's Day. Though I still go through the motions of calling my mom to wish her well, I have been given the burden of watching my wife's face turn to sorrow as this day approaches. It's just another reminder that she doesn't have a living child to call her mommy. She never got to experience the love and hugs of a living child, only the heartbreaking feeling of being a mom to two beautiful babies that have died. As her husband, I want to take away her pain and replace it with all of the joys of motherhood, but that's not possible.

The first couple of years after the losses, my wife didn't even want to acknowledge that it was Mother's Day. I wasn't sure if I should get her a card or not. In my mind she is a mother to two beautiful children, but I also understand her pain and realization that she is the mother of two beautiful children that have died. I remember the first year that she had hinted that it would be okay for others to celebrate Mother's Day with her. On top of buying her a gift to memorialize Katie and Noah, I wanted to get her a Mother's Day card. I remember standing in the aisle of the local Hallmark store looking for a Mother's Day card for mothers that have lost a child. Certainly we can't be the only parents that have lost a child, so why isn't there a card that acknowledges these parents. When I told the lady behind the counter that I was looking for a Mother's Day card for my wife that has lost two children, she paused, absorbed what I just said and replied, "I am so sorry for your losses". It took me off guard since most people either act like you didn't just say that or they acknowledge the pain of the mother, not so much the dad.

*Continued on next page*

# Poems and Articles

## *A Journey Towards Father's Day ...continued from previous page*

It's finally June and the last difficult month for a while. Once I get past Father's Day, I'll be in the clear until the Holiday Season starts again in November. Early June brings the day we lost our sweet baby Noah. It has been five years since we lost Noah and the day of his death is permanently burned into my memory. I know it's a wound that has healed with time, but it left a scar that remains forever. We spent his Birthday together and just like Katie's, filled with cake, songs, smiles, tears and balloons.

The day that Noah died was the day that I realized I was a father. A father that didn't try to run from or deny the pain I had festering inside of me since the loss of Katie. With Katie I tried to bury the pain by keeping my mind occupied with work and anything else that would distract me from what I was feeling inside. I responded like most men are expected to respond. You put your head down and keep moving. But I found out that doesn't work for very long. The day that Noah died was the day I realized I needed to deal with two losses. The one I had been trying to avoid for the last 18 months and the one that was right there in front of me that day in early June 2006.

It took me a while to fully grasp the concept of being a father to a child that has died. It's tough to accept that I will not be getting any hugs or kisses from my babies on Fathers Day. There are times where I feel like I have been cheated because I know that I will never experience the "traditional" role of fatherhood. I've lost the experience of being their daddy, someone to hold and protect them when they are scared and someone to spend time with and share my life with. I know that there will be no first steps or words, no dance recitals, no bike rides without training wheels, no playing catch, no Christmas mornings, no first dates, no graduations, no college, no weddings and no grandchildren.

But I can't change any of this. I wouldn't even if I could, doing so would deny their existence. No matter how short a time I had with them, I would never give up the opportunity and privilege to be their dad. So as difficult as it is on Father's Day, I know I have been given a gift from them. A gift you can't buy in a store. They gave me the most precious gift I have ever received, the gift of a father's love for their child. A love I never understood until they came into my life.

Should I celebrate Fathers Day, should I not? Not really sure how to approach this day. But as Father's Day approaches this year, I am still trying to learn to embrace this day and embrace my role as their father. The uneasy anticipation has lifted over the last couple of years and has continued to be replaced with feelings of hope and renewal.

This year I'll spend Father's Day with my wife and my dear friend and dog, Buddy. Other than my wife, I probably won't hear well wishes for a Happy Father's Day. Most people don't know what to say or if they should say anything, so they don't. I'll spend most of my day thinking about Katie and Noah, but not with a heavy heart like some would suspect, but with a heart filled with love for my children and compassion for all of the other grieving dads that are trying to cope and survive this difficult day.



# Poems and Articles

## Father's Day: Help for a Grieving Father

Written by Clara Hinton | May 30, 2008  
<http://www.silentgrief.com>

Father's are such amazing people. They are strong. They are brave. They are protectors. They are providers. And, they also are grievers. Many times we forget the last part. Fathers have hearts that are kind and sensitive, and they feel pain. So often, when child loss occurs, people will direct their comments to only the mother. "How are you feeling?" "I'm so sorry this has happened to you." "It's going to take a while for you to work through this, but I'm sure your husband will stay strong and help you."

Father's Day is a difficult day for any father who has lost a child, and in many ways it is a doubly difficult day because he knows that he cannot fix or repair the pain that his wife is feeling. That is a double blow to the heart of a father. His heart is hurting both for his loss and for the fact that he cannot take away this pain for his wife.

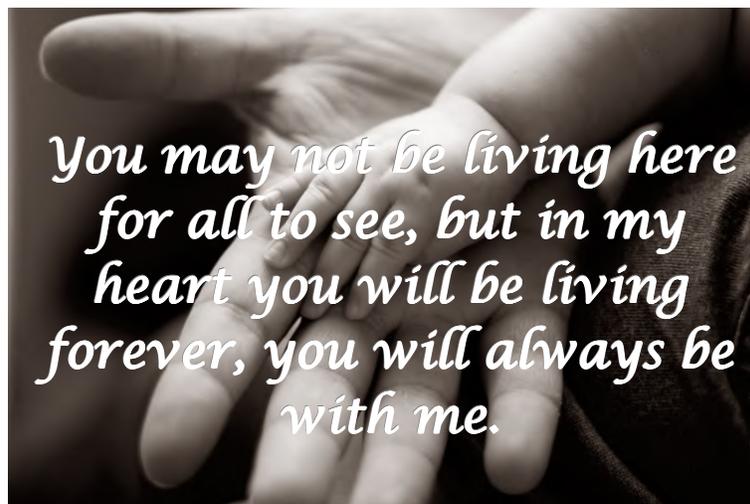
Reminders of fatherhood are all around. We see photos of dads and their children in magazines, on television commercials, in ads for clothing and toys. Walk into any store that sells bikes, fishing gear, hunting gear, or toys and there will be advertisements for fathers and their children. Seeing these visual pictures are like hot irons searing the heart of a man who has lost a child. And, often he has nobody to talk to, and no place to go where he can shed his tears or show his emotions.

We need to be especially sensitive to men who have lost a child on Father's Day because they often will not express any of their feelings of pain, yet the pain is still there. It's okay to mention the loss of his child. In fact, it's appropriate to do so because a father will be thinking of his child and needs validation of his fatherhood. It's always encouraging to know that you are remembered. It's especially encouraging to know that others have remembered your child.

Keep your comments brief, but don't be afraid to say, "I know this is a hard day for you, but I want you to know I'm thinking about you." Those are powerful words and can help a hurting heart to begin to heal.

Most men like to do things with their hands and often will express their sorrow by building something or working extra hours at the office proving that they can accomplish a hard task. Try to be understanding during those moments when it is hard for a man to speak of his pain with words. Encourage things like working in the yard, going hiking, playing basketball, or building a bird house. Anything that is physical is a way to relieve many of the pressures of a pained, hurting heart.

Lastly, remember that Father's Day is a day to remember and honor fathers. Even though a father does not have his child nearby physically, he is still a father. By you validating him as being a father, you will help bring about healing and encouragement to a grieving father's heart.



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](mailto:sharingparents@yahoo.com) with "newsletter contribution" in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is July 15th.

# Parent Submissions

I love you because...

I love you because you are my baby girl,  
and my sweet baby you shall always be.

I love you because of your preciousness,  
the preciousness I wish all can see.

I love you because of your beauty,  
the hands and feet I wish I could again hold.

I love you because of your spirit,  
the spirit we got only a glimpse to behold.

I love you because of all you teach me,  
especially the love you teach me day by day.

But if you were to ask me why I love you,  
I think I can know no other way.

*By Ryan Stiltz  
in loving memory of Emily Diane Stiltz, 2-7-2007*

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](mailto:sharingparents@yahoo.com) with "newsletter contribution" in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is July 15th.

# Librarian's Corner

*A message from our librarian...*

Dear Parents,

Our lending library needs your help. If you have attended Sharing Parents in the last 3 years and borrowed one of our library books, we ask that you please check to see if you still have one of our books with you. You can mail it to us, a mailing label is in the card pocket, or contact us at [sharingparents@yahoo.com](mailto:sharingparents@yahoo.com) for a pick up. Our lending library is a valuable resource for our grieving parents, so we appreciate your help in maintaining the quality and choices we have available in our library.

Thank you!



*We hope you found the following books helpful. If they are still sitting on your bookshelf, please return them so they can help others as well!*

## **OVERDUE BOOKS FROM THE SHARING PARENTS LIBRARY:**

*Pregnancy After a Loss: A Guide .....* by Carol Cirulli Lanham

*No Smile Cookies Today* by Tapp

*After the Darkest Hour, the Sun Will Shine Again* by Elizabeth Mehren

*Safe in the Arms of God* by John Mac Arthur

*Dancing on the Moon* by Roper & Gumm

*Angel Chase & His Mommy's Sign* by Colleen Severance

*The Essential Adoption Handbook* by Colleen Alexander-Roberts

*The Good Grief Club* by M. Novak

*Healing Together* by Lister & Lovell

*For Better or Worse; A Handbook for Couples Whose Child Has Died* by M. Doerr

*Unsupported Losses* by S. Ilse

*Miscarriage After Infertility* by Freda & Semelsberger

*How to Prevent Miscarriage* by Semchyshyn & Colman

*In Pursuit of Pregnancy* by Liebmann-Smith

*What Next?* by Erling, Ilse & Burns

# Librarian's Corner

## Book Reviews

### Book Review

by Jennifer Stiltz

*Healing Your Grieving Heart After Stillbirth - 100 Practical Ideas for Parents and Families* by Dr. Alan Wolfelt. In this book, Dr. Wolfelt explains the difference between grief, an inward feeling, and mourning, the outward expression of grief. The intention of this book is to help parents mourn the deaths of their babies; to help parents "be kind to yourself as you confront and eventually embrace your grief..." (page 3). The goal is to help parents heal which means reaching a point where they can integrate their grief and move forward in life as the new person that grief has shaped them. Healing is not to be confused with "curing" which is what society often attempts to force upon the bereaved.

There are 100 ideas to help parents work through their grief and mourn the death of their child. When an idea or piece of advice is introduced, a brief explanation of how to apply it, and why it is beneficial is given. There is also a "Carpe Diem" activity to go along with each of the 100 ideas. The ideas and advice cover a broad range of topics including the 6 needs of mourning (1. Acknowledge the reality of the death, 2. Embrace the pain of the loss, 3. Remember the baby who died, 4. Develop a new self-identity, 5. Search for meaning, and 6. Receive ongoing support from others), dealing with hurtful questions and comments from others, being compassionate and loving to you partner and living children, handling more difficult days and holidays, finding good support people, and reconnecting to people and reconfiguring your life, and embracing your transformation. The Carpe Diem activities include some sort of active process such as meditation, journaling, and creating keepsakes or new traditions.

*"For it is in nurturing ourselves, in allowing ourselves the time and loving attention we need to journey through grief, that we find meaning in our continued living."*  
page 4

*"Integrating your baby's death is a painful, ongoing task that you accomplish in doses over time."*  
page 81

Throughout the book, Dr. Wolfelt encourages parents to embrace their grief (in does) while practicing self-care in order to integrate their loss and transform themselves so they can once again find purpose and meaning in their lives. "You are not the same person you were before this experience, and part of your grief journey is getting reacquainted with your new self." (page 25)

While this book is probably most beneficial to those within the first year of their loss, parents at any point in their grief journey would be able to find some helpful advice and activities.

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](mailto:sharingparents@yahoo.com) with "book review" in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is July 15th.

### **New Additions to the Sharing Parents' Lending Library**

[The Mourner's Book of Courage: 30 Days of Encouragement](#) (2012) by Dr. Alan Wolfelt

[Creating a New Normal...After the Death of a Child](#) (2010) by Sandy Fox

# 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 **July 15, 2013**.

*A love gift was made in loving memory of*

**Leland Pierce Wilson**

*Tom and Carol Rose*

*In loving memory of*

**Leland Pierce Wilson**

*Benjamin Norton*

*In loving memory of a beautiful little  
boy we love, though we did not meet*

**Leland Pierce Wilson**

*1Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace himself  
sanctify you completely, and make your whole spirit and  
body and soul be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord  
Jesus Christ."*

*Love, the Klecha family*

*A love gift was donated by*

**Mona Williams**

*A love gift was donated by*

**Ryan Kelley**

*A love gift was donated by*

**Bryan Canter**

# Love Gifts

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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:**