

November, 2010

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 Meetings

November 14, 2010: Permission to Grieve / Father's Group
 discussion
 December 12, 2010: Handling the Holidays

Subsequent Pregnancy Meetings

November 22, 2010 (7-9pm) Subsequent Pregnancy
 December No Subsequent Pregnancy Meeting

Inside this issue:

Message from
 the President.....2
 Remembering Our Babies...3
 Hole in my heart.....4
 Holidays.....5-6
 Parental Grief.....7
 Great Meaning.....8
 Love Gifts.....9

Message From The President

Dear Parents & Friends of Sharing Parents,

Three weeks ago Sharing Parents held our 24th annual October memorial ceremony. For many of us the memorial is a special time. I love that there is a place that I can go and be surrounded by other parents that know the pain of losing a baby, even several years after their loss. I love that families gather supporting one another remembering the missing member of their family. I love hearing children proudly speak the name of their brother/sister into the microphone during the candle lighting ceremony. I love that I leave with a memento to place into my daughter Madison's memory box.

To be honest, the memorial also stirs up some deep feelings of pain and hurt for me. I think that these feelings come from the first October Memorial that my husband and I attended. It had been 8 months since Madison was born when we attended the memorial in 2006. I remember sitting in the chair on that crisp fall afternoon listening to someone read a poem and feeling a sharp pain cross over me. It was as if a giant band-aid had been ripped off of my entire body to reveal that my wound was still fresh and oozing. After attending several general meetings and the Short Term Grief series, I thought I was "done." It was at that memorial, when doves soared overhead, that I began to comprehend that I wasn't done grieving, and instead had just began the new life of accepting that my baby was gone forever.

However, this year the memorial seemed different to me. The message that Mike Day shared was full of open honesty and *hope*. The parents that stepped up to share about their babies, shared about their pain and *hope*. The theme, "Where Joy and Sorrow Meet", conveyed *hope* and a future. And the butterfly plant watchers that we all received as mementos were handmade and completely donated by one of our parents, Trina & Jason Giacomo in memory of their son Joren – a gesture of *hope* and comfort to other parents.

I suppose the biggest thing that I love about Sharing Parents is *hope*. That together we can work through our grief toward *hope*. We do not have to cry alone as there are forever friends to be made with a special relationships based upon *hope*. There are facilitators who have actually walked in our footsteps available to share their story and serve as a real life picture of *hope*. Losing a child is horrific and leaves deep scars of pain, but we also have *hope*. *Hope* that the sun will shine. *Hope* that tomorrow will come. *Hope* that our love for our babies will grow and bloom in a special way that only the seed of their short lives can.

As the year comes to an end, I encourage you to look back and reflect upon everything you and your family have gone through this year. Remember the good and the bad. The trials and the victories. The hurts, pains & losses along with the victories, comforts and healing. Each of us has our own story. A story that includes a broken heart and empty arms where a baby was suppose to be held and hugged. Whatever your circumstance, whatever your path, it is your story. A love story about a sweet life that was taken too soon and a mommy/daddy that must find daily hope in honoring that precious child's memory.

Peace, Hope and Love to you all in 2011,
Kelly Joppa

"Madison's Mommy"

Sharing Parents 2010 President

2010

Sharing Parents Volunteers

President

Kelly Joppa

Vice President

Kristie Avila

Secretary

Joanna Hurtt

Treasurer

Daryle Lozano

Short Term Grief Coordinator

Molly Lawrence

Pregnancy Interruption Coordinator

Amy Bourke

Listening Line Coordinator

Molly Lawrence

Listening Line Volunteers

Kristie Avila & Joanna Hurtt

Oct. Memorial Coordinator

Noel Lehman & Stacey Hisey

Community Outreach

Kelly Joppa

Event/Fundraiser Coordinator

Heidi Lozano

Librarian

Rebecca Erickson

Newsletter Team

Mia Omega & Brion Maciel

Newsletter Assistant

Heidi Lozano

Webmaster

Ken Hisey

Volunteer Parents

Eric Joppa, Deanna Lockhart,
Shannon Anderson,
Laura McHugh, Kristin Lunardi,
Jamie Rose,
Meghann & Phillip Hurt,
Jennifer & Ryan Stiltz,
Suzie & Brion Maciel,
Michelle & Chris Peters,
Lynne & Neil Genzel

Remembering Our Babies With Love

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

NOVEMBER

Sally Adame
Isaac Alcaraz
Travis Adrian Maheras
Autumn Joy Davidson
Baby Davis
Baby Denny
Victoria Rose Domino
Carmen Rose Acuna
Abigail Furtado-Rinker
Keegan Turner Gilwee
Malachi Ezekiel Harvey
Faith Marie Jones
Baby Krebs
Zachary Mikalos Kristianous
Grace Kukas
Gabriel Moore March
Justin Pardi
Kori Peters
Saphire Robertson-Horner
Tara Marie Schmidt
Nathan Russell Scott
Jody Lee Shunk
Emily Steele
Samantha Rae Troutman
Zoey Louise Van Eenennaam
Isadora Vargas
Baby Wyzanowski
Kate Walker

DECEMBER

Cherish
Emerson Avila-DeRosa
Baby Berger
Baby Camarena
Karolina Yelzavetta Cooper
Molly Ann Cottman
Colin Devey
Samuel Isacc Dressen
Christopher Eells
Justin Daniel Fleming
Baby Fraser
Baby Keating-Frost
Graham Lynn Graham
Ryle Lynn Graham
Swasti Gupta
Rebecca Grace Hadsell
Zackary Herkins
Santrika Shayann Holloway
Baby Heckley
Blaine Kevin Heckley, Jr.
Jack Ryan Hildebrand
Olivia Lane Hirschberg
Sarah Lampe
Alura Marrow
Michael McNeese
Gino Mills
Nico Mills
Alexandros Nichols
Baby Ocel
Gwenyth Marjorie Page
Angel Ramirez Aguilar
Sofia Senna
James Terrence Waldron
Nicholas John Waldron
Christopher Thomas Webster
Baby Westrup

JANUARY

Liberty
Lannette Jasmine Adams Steptoe
Andrew Bond dos Reis
Tea Elyse Cepeda
Baby Beck
Brandis Behnken
Logan Henry Berry
Darian Brooks
Naomi Brown
Hector Campbell-Lockwood
Lynn Blackmen III
Michael James Cromeenes
Samuel Alan Demmin
Baby Dressen
Audrey Lynn Hargrove
Timothy John Kilkelly
Timothy John Kilkelly
Elsabella Brophy Jett
Tanner Kelley
Eli Kuhlman
Gracie Ann Laackmann
Evelyn
Christian Lewis
Selma Livadic
Cashew Martinez-Gardner
Meagan Monas
Hananiah James Oates
Elias Matthew Ponce Zepeda
Angelica Robertson-Horner
Oliver Robertson-Horner
Makenzie Lynn Scacco
Baby Schreck
Brayden Rose-Siefker
Raleigh Rose-Siefker
Owen Staley
Baby Mallory Van der Veer
Baby Matthew Van der Veer
Owen Staley
Baby Wildermuth
Kamore Kahealani

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

Doctor, I Have a Hole In My Heart

Written by Joanna Hurtt, Jolie's mommy

I am at an age where I don't feel comfortable getting pregnant and starting over again. I have had four children. My oldest is five and my youngest is 2 months. Eric, my husband, is content with the number of living children we have and truly, I am too. Then why is it that deep down I have this unquenchable want to have another? I ask why, but I really already know the answer. It's Jolie.

Jolie is my second child in the line up. She wasn't with us long, but she has forever created a hole in my heart. I seem to think that with every subsequent pregnancy and/or baby I bring into this world that that huge hole will somehow go away. I have had two subsequent babies since I lost Jolie and to no avail, that hole is still there. It has not shrunk. It has not grown. It is still there. No changes.

Now I didn't have subsequent children to replace Jolie, but I did think it would lessen the pain or fill that empty hole she left, at least to some degree. But, I have learned that none of my children can or will ever fill Jolie's shoes and if I am truly honest with myself, I know there is nothing that can ever fill my Jolie hole.

As I already said, my child bearing years are now over. Eric and I are ready to move on to the next chapter of our lives. But, why then am I having a hard time doing that? The answer again is Jolie. Most days I know I don't want another child, but then there are days when I wake up and begin thinking maybe Eric and I should have another. I will even begin imagining how my family would look if I did indeed have another. But, I just can't. I have to remind myself that NO other pregnancy and/or baby will lessen the Jolie hole that will forever be present.

The acceptance of the Jolie hole has been a hard one. There are some days I feel I have conquered the fact that I will forever live with a hole in my heart and then there are days I fall flat on my face. Jolie has taught me a lot in these past three years, but I can see I still have a lot to learn from her.

And so, there I am. I want Jolie back. I know that will never change. But what my family encompasses is four children, three living and one angel. It's not what I ever envisioned, but this is it. My heart might want more children, but my family is as complete as it can be. I love Jolie and will always want her here, for she has left a hole in my heart.

Remember Your Child During the Holidays

Written by Clara Hinton | Dec 09, 2002

We generally associate the December holidays with festive decorations, gift giving, and the laughter of little children. For a parent who has lost a young child, just the word holiday can cause great emotional pain. It is difficult to walk into a store and be bombarded with all of the reminders of children. The toys, holiday clothes, colorful children's gift wrap, and the holiday music being sung by young children all bring on waves of grief that are difficult to bear.

Often parents who have lost a young child find themselves falling into a depression around holiday season time. It would be far easier to avoid the holidays than to face the season without the joy of your precious child. With some planning prior to the holiday season, the pain of loss can be softened somewhat.

At some point, though, it becomes necessary to face the reality of the holiday season as being very different. Parents need ways to remember their child during this time of the year. By doing something special, parents will find it a bit easier and far more healing to face the otherwise empty holiday season.

It is quite healing to remember your child by lighting a candle in memory of your little one. The candle can be placed on a decorated table in a special place in your home where you will feel your child is still very close to you. There are many types of memory candles one can buy, and you can place small mementos of your child on the table with the candle. This might be painful to see at first, but it will also create an atmosphere for healing.

Remember your child by placing a special ornament on the tree. There are many stores that will do creative engraving, which you might find to be a desirable option for you. Have a special phrase or saying engraved along with the date of your child's birth and death. The keepsake ornament will become treasured all the days of your life.

Remember your child by creating a memory box that can be shared with others during the holidays. Use your imagination as to what you want to place in the memory box. You can even decorate the memory box together as a special time of gathering the family together to remember.

Many parents find it very healing to hang a stocking with their child's name on it by the fireplace mantle. Fill the stocking with some small gifts that were memorable of your child. Also, it might be very healing to write a letter or poem to your child and place it in the stocking. During a family meal, have someone read the letter, then place it in the memory box you've created. Each year a letter can be added. This will one day become a family treasure.

If you have some sewing ability, a wonderful way of remembering your child is to create a small quilt from some of your child's clothes. This quilt will be cherished for years to come, as it will remain a priceless remembrance of your special child.

As you think of ways to remember your child during the holidays, do things that will be healing to your heart. Remember—there is no right or wrong way to remember. Do those things that are healing specifically to you! By remembering and including your child in the holiday, you will promote an atmosphere of healing and hope.

Avoiding Holiday Depression

Written by Clara Hinton | Dec 11, 2001

The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy, laughter, and good cheer. This is also a time when the radio constantly plays old-time favorite Christmas carols, houses are glittering with decorations, and the stores are filled with busy people rushing to finish the last of their shopping.

For the person who has experienced child loss, this holiday season of joy might well turn into a season of “blues”. It is very easy to slip into a time of stress and anxiety related depression, even if you are a person not prone to experience negative emotions. Even if depression does not enter your life, you might develop headaches, excessive drinking, the inability to sleep, and overeating as a result of having a difficult time adjusting during the holiday season.

Holiday depression can be avoided, and there are several very practical things that can be done to ward off the holiday blues.

- Don't expect your holidays to be the same. You have lost a child, and that is a major heartbreak. Allow yourself the necessary break away from past routines.
- Just because it is the holidays doesn't automatically mean you can set aside all of your emotions and put on a happy face. There might be temporary outbursts of tears, sadness, or anger. That is normal, and to be expected.
- Avoid alcohol. As tempting as it might be, alcohol will only add to your depression, not help it to go away. Drink healthy fresh fruit juices instead.
- Recognize that loss brings about changes. You will not feel the same because things in your life have been dramatically changed by the loss of your child. Don't place unrealistic expectations on yourself.
- Find one person you can talk to who will understand you. It is important to know that you have a friend who will listen. There are several depression hot lines available 24 hours a day with trained personnel able to offer you instant help and guidance. Pick up the phone and make the call if you feel you are in need of a listening ear.
- Don't set yourself up for additional pain by trying to carry on past traditions. You can't make things “just like they used to be.” When you have suffered through the pain of child loss, nothing will ever be quite the same. This is an ideal time to begin some new family traditions.
- Find one person you can help. Even though this is an old cliché, it's one that works. When you do something for another person, you take the focus off of your own problems momentarily, and you feel something very special—“someone needs you”. You are given purpose, and that helps you in your healing.

Getting through the holidays after going through child loss is not an easy thing to do. However, by taking the above precautions you can be more aware of your “blues” and keep a certain amount of control over a very painful situation.

Remind yourself often that grief is very hard work. It taxes you mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Grief takes a lot of your time and energy. You cannot hide from it, but you can face it with some positive tools that can help.

Above all else, be kind to yourself. Make allowances, especially during the holiday season.

Parental Grief

The theme of parental mourning has been a universal one throughout the centuries. In the literature on bereavement, writers repeat certain themes, thoughts, and reflections; they talk of the powerful and often conflicting emotions involved in "the pain of grief and the spiral of mourning; [they refer to] the heartbreak at the heart of things...grief's contradictions"; they speak of parents devastated by grief (Moffat 1992, xxiii).

It is frequently said that the grief of bereaved parents is the most intense grief known. When a child dies, parents feel that a part of them has died, that a vital and core part of them has been ripped away. Bereaved parents indeed do feel that the death of their child is "the ultimate deprivation" (Arnold and Gemma 1994, 40). The grief caused by their child's death is not only painful but profoundly disorienting-children are not supposed to die. These parents are forced to confront an extremely painful and stressful paradox; they are faced with a situation in which they must deal both with the grief caused by their child's death and with their inherent need to continue to live their own lives as fully as possible. Thus, bereaved parents must deal with the contradictory burden of wanting to be free of this overwhelming pain and yet needing it as a reminder of the child who died.

Bereaved parents continue to be parents of the child who died. They will always feel the empty place in their hearts caused by the child's death; they were, and always will be, the loving father and mother of that child. Yet, these parents have to accept that they will never be able to live their lives with or share their love openly with the child. So they must find ways to hold on to the memories. Many bereaved parents come to learn that "memories are the precious gifts of the heart...[that they need] these memories and whispers, to help create a sense of inner peace, a closeness" (Wisconsin Perspectives Newsletter, Spring 1989, 1).

Bereaved parents need to know that their child will be remembered, not just by them but also by family and friends. They need to have the child acknowledged and referred to by name. They want that child's life to matter. They do not want to forget and they don't want others to forget. One bereaved parent said, "The mention of my child's name may bring tears to my eyes, but it also brings music to my ears" (Anonymous).

Little Things Have Great Meaning

Mia Omega, Leo's Mommy

It has been 4 years since my son Leo died. Small items such as a tiny toy lion that was with him in the NICU, a picture of him the day he was baptized and a candle that was given to me by my Sharing Parents friends, have become treasures that I keep safely displayed in honor of Leo. Over the years, I have found these reminders have become very important to me. I walk past each memento several times a day sometimes I touch one, sometimes a memory of him floods my mind and sometimes I just have to take a deep breath. I wish I could say that they make the hole in my heart go away, but I can't. They do however reaffirm how much I love our son. The lion was with him for the 13 days he spent with us – it is a symbol of Leo's strength and courage he showed us in those days. The picture reminds me that we will be together again. And the candle, it reminds me of the love and support my friends have showed me and my husband over the years.

What little mementos or treasures to you have to remember your sweet baby? If you would like to share a story with us, please send it to miaomega17@gmail.com and I will be happy to add it to the next edition of our Newsletter.

Please welcome the safe arrival of:

Jace Daniel Hurtt

August 15, 2010

Joanna and Eric Hurtt have welcomed their son, Jace Daniel Hurtt. He was born on August 15, 2010. He weighed in at 7 lbs 4oz and was 19 inches long. Jace is the little brother of angel Jolie.

Please welcome the safe arrival of:

Abigail Hope Lucy Peters

October 22, 2010

Michelle, Chris, & Gabriel Peters welcomed Abigail Hope Lucy Peters into their family on October 22, 2010 at 3:19 pm. She was 9 lbs 12 ozs, 21 inches long. She is watched from heaven by her big brothers Ethan Michael, Kori, & Levi Peters.

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 20, 2010.

**In Loving Memory of
Summer Olivia Sprenger**

Date of Birth: 06/21/09

Date of Death: 06/21/09

Donors: Lisa Tedder & Laura Zwald

Sending birthday wishes to heaven for you,
Summer!

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: