



## SA's "Outreach for Healing"

*..comfort & healing as we remember & honor our special baby.*

SHARE Atlanta's "Outreach for Healing" program is three-fold. As our members reach out to others in memory of their baby(s), they are providing comfort and support to others as they work to find peace and strength for healing within themselves. They also are making the issues and needs that we in the Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Community are so aware of...visible to others. Love and sadness mingle as we struggle to cope with the tragic death of our baby. If we embrace our feelings, use grief's energies to do outreach and other activities that bring comfort to us, healing slowly happens. Healing happens at different paces for different people, but with work and support each person can gradually realize that as healing happens...

*The love stays...forever in our hearts.*



### "Walk to Remember"



#### March of Dimes' Walk America...April

Walk in memory of your babies to help MODS. They support research and outreach for prevention of prematurity, birth defects, and medical conditions that cause babies to be born still. They are bright light on the path of finding the answers that will help many of our families. <http://www.shareatlanta.org/MODmenu.htm>

### 4B's/Blankets of Love..



Dawn Edgeworth, Diane Overton, Kelly, Carrie O'Leary and her mother, Elaine Freeman hold the blankets that they made in June.

Our families and friends make blankets and baby clothes to be given to hospitals to comfort newly bereaved parents. <http://www.shareatlanta.org/blanketoflovemenu.htm>

### Festival of Tree's "Memorial" Tree.

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/fotmenu.htm>



Memorial ornaments are donated by our parents and our babies' names are included on the tree. Our tree is sold to raise money for the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Lt-rt: LaWanda Lee, Diane Jordan, Julie Franklin, Nikecia Ingram, Suzanne Chezem, Erin Dickerson, Polly Keen, Marcia McGinnis

### Annual Memorial Services



Our annual memorial services provide us a safe haven to remember, share, and continue to heal. Please join us. Coming together and supporting one another is part of SA's tradition.

Devon & Nihkol Jackson read in memory of Jaden.

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/shareatlantaservices.htm>

**October is "Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness" Month**

## How and Why SHARE Atlanta's 4 B's Mission Began... From our 2004 Winter Newsletter..



SA Moms with Blankets  
2004

### SHARE Atlanta's Blanket of Love or our "4Bs' Mission "Wrapping our babies in love..."

SHARE Atlanta is pleased to announce a very special outreach project that is just unfolding. We believe this will blossom into a very special outreach for many different people over the next years.

#### Comfort is needed after the tragic loss of a baby...

This outreach is most special because it has been created in loving memory of two of our very own precious babies, Zachary and Jeremy Mishkoff who were born still to Kelly and Alan Mishkoff this year. In her loss of their sons, Kelly had expressed how comforting it was to hold her sons in handmade blankets that the hospital provided. Jennifer Carter, Kelly's close friend, visited me in an effort to explore possible ideas to support this family and other SHARE Atlanta families. Jennifer opened me to the idea of making tiny sized fleece blankets for babies who would be held for a brief time while "bittersweet hellos and sad good-byes" are said.

#### Special mementos..

These blankets will be given to the parent as a special remembrance of their baby to help comfort them in their journey for healing.

These soft, baby patterned, fleece blankets will have our heart logo on them. A small card recognizing the person or group who made them, and SHARE Atlanta as the group who is donating it will be attached. Jennifer is willing to teach some of our mothers and the women from CareShare senior centers (who lovingly make our memorial boxes) how to create these easily made blankets. We will have a workshop to kick-off this project.

In November, Sharon Gregory, nurse and long time friend from Dekalb Medical, had shown me tiny baby clothes that they have had given to them, and my mind took off! In considering the broader possibilities of these combined ideas, I have named our project the 4B's short for "Blankets of Love...Buntings, Bonnets, and Booties." I have found patterns for making simple crocheted, knitted, quilted, or sewn baby blankets, buntings, booties and bonnets that are designed for this very purpose.

#### The blessing of hand making these blankets...

Mary Beth, mom of Mikaela, wrote to me, "While it was a bit hard to make a blanket knowing that it wasn't going to be for my baby, somehow it helped me knowing that I might be helping another family who just went through what I did. Making the blankets was more therapeutic for me than I could have imagined."

This is a project that you can do from the comfort of your home or join us at the senior center or one of our work shops that we will be holding. Healing comes from outreach and mutually supporting one another. Now, thanks to Jennifer and Sharon, and in memory of Zachary and Jeremy and our own special baby, another door has been opened for our parents. For more details, please visit our site, look for our email updates and our next newsletter.



Kelly with her mom and daughter, Jessica...  
"Gathering blankets together to  
take to the hospital" 2006

#### 4Bs on SHARE Atlanta's Website:

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/blanketoflovemenu.htm>

Our website has many pages with ideas for making all kinds of items: blankets, booties, bonnets, buntings, tiny stuffed mementos, gowns, etc...all of which our parents would cherish. Several people have asked me about these patterns, and they are linked to on our site.

# Healing Stories

## from SHARE Atlanta Parents...

### PART 1 ~ Email from Carrie (Evan's mom)

I remember being upset that I didn't get to have a blanket like those that SA is making for Evan Elaine. After the candlelighting, my mom told me that Evan did have a blanket, but when she was brought back to our room, she didn't have it. This made me so sad!

A couple of weeks later I was having a bad night. I told God that I was tired of being so sad, and that I was going to go upstairs and unpack one of Evan's last boxes. He told me to go ahead. It must seem funny to throw a temper tantrum to God, but I felt like that was what I was doing. Then He called me on it! He said go and unpack that box! I really didn't want to, I was just sort of 'stamping my foot' at Him, but I did. I had looked in the box before and there were toys and beautiful clothes for Evan from my baby shower. When I opened the box there in a ziplock plastic bag with the words 'lg girl' written on it was Evans 4Bs' blanket! I had looked in there before and had not seen her blanket.

I slept with it that night and hold it often. It meant and continues to mean so much to me. I found a card pinned to the blanket telling me it was made by Allison Egger in memory of her baby, Hannah. I hope she knew when she was making this blanket that it really would make such a difference in a mother's life and in her heart. I believe God led me to that box that night. I also believe He is leading us to help each other. I am so grateful!



*A full circle of love...* Carrie cradled her daughter, Evan, in the blanket that Allison had made in memory of her daughter, Hannah. Evan's picture is resting on her blanket...



Allison Egger & Suzanne Chezem  
at workshop

### Marcia's email to Carrie about Hannah's Parents

As I was reading your email, Jason and Allison Egger showed up on my front porch to bring some cute fleece for our next 4Bs' workshop. They are due in March with baby Owen, and Allison wanted to make sure we had some fleece from them. They came in, and we had a grand time chatting about plans for baby Owen! Then, I retrieved your note and read your story to them. They were greatly touched! Allison was so glad to know that her blanket had supported you! Wasn't it interesting that your note and the Egger's arrival were timed together...

### Email from Carrie

I was so excited to hear back from you. I am amazed and have tears in my eyes over the way God works! I am beyond thrilled that Allison and her husband are, first, due in March and, second, showed up at your house today!!!!

I am so glad you shared the letter with her! I hope she felt good in her heart about what she has done to help others. I would love to bring Evan's blanket to the meeting on Wednesday!! It has so inspired me to want to help in all ways that I can. I am a walking testimony of how the kindness of those in SA can not only help a hurting heart; they can soothe a heart-broken mother.

Thank you, Marcia, for your sweet and perfectly timed note today. My husband and I are both just basking in your words! My husband, Mike, is still in awe at the timing of all of this-so am I!



### February 2005's 4Bs' Workshop..

Julie Franklin, Kimberly Hallmark, Allison Egger, Coretta Monroe, Julia McClure, & Kelly Mishkoff

4Bs' "Blankets of Love"  
<http://www.shareatlanta.org/blanketoflovemenu.htm>

## Our Special Children...



### CASEY'S GIFT

The spirit of the spring  
The spirit of the warm summer  
The beauty of the spirit of the autumn with its golds,  
and reds, oranges, and greens was the time you  
came and touched our souls.  
The spirit of winter  
The spirit of dawn  
The spirit of twilight  
The spirit of slumber  
are now protecting your love and joy that was  
given for such a short time for us - your  
mummy and daddy and brother Declan to treasure.

I see you now in a beautiful place asleep beneath the protecting tree.  
A shaft of sunlight streaming down in this tranquil place.


All the spirits above are there  
to take you on your journeys of joy and wonderment.  
Through my eyes you will see the sunsets and beauties of the world.  
Through your daddy's eyes the beauties of nature.  
Through Declan's eyes you will grow and walk  
beside him always.  
You will be the cool whisper of a wind on a hot summer's day.  
You will be the joy Declan feels at Christmas  
because all these things you give to him.

Lisa

Casey Brock Jowett ~25/10/200-13/11/00 ~ England  
<http://www.shareatlanta.org/specialmenu.htm>

### MY DAUGHTER, MY BLESSING

Written for my daughter Evan Elaine O'Leary born May 28<sup>th</sup> 2005



I thought I'd teach you safety as I swaddled you in Pink  
A gentle kiss so tender on your perfect newborn cheek  
I thought I'd soothe you with my voice whenever you would cry  
Always in those early days I knew I'd be nearby  
I thought we'd learn together how to do those baby things  
The bathing's and the changing's- we'd master your routine  
And with my proudest mommy smile I'd show you to the world  
But while I'd let them see you, I'd protect my precious girl  
I thought I'd watch you sweetly learn the miracles of life  
The beauty and the blessings and the guidance God provides  
I thought you'd see your nursery and snuggle in your bed  
But God our Father whispered something else instead  
Not this time, my daughter, He told me in my heart  
Know your child is with me and she's never very far  
Look at all the lessons *she* is teaching *you*  
And so my sweetest angel that is what I'm going to do  
You have taught me safety throughout this storm of grief  
And shown me that no matter what I'm strongest on my knees  
You soothe us with your giggles we hear deep inside of us  
Our daughter's joyful laughter cuts through all that is unjust  
When in those very early days all I could do was cry  
Jesus held you close to me I felt you dry my eyes  
And with my proudest mommy smile I show you at special times  
With stories of your presence and how you've changed so many lives  
Through your eyes I've learned again the blessings of this life  
Peace and joy and love and hope are your giving lullabies  
I'm often in your nursery I feel your presence there  
My precious little teacher we've so much more to share  
Thank you God for our daughter she's all our dreams come true  
Just like all the children that He has given you.

Carrie O'Leary



**SHARE Atlanta's Angel**  
SA's Angel Memorial Garden  
Sandy Springs, GA  
<http://www.shareatlanta.org/angelmnu.htm>

# Hannah's Hope



Hannah had already prepared a few things for the baby. The week before, she and John had bought the crib, but then at the last minute they had decided to wait for a more definite ultrasound before choosing between covers of pink or blue. They wanted their baby's room to speak either of ribbons and tea parties or of baseballs and ant farms. No one-color-fits-all-yellow for this baby. They had waited too long. With the pregnancy going so well, they savored the luxury of dreaming in color about their future.

Oh, but that was then. That was before the bleeding had started so unexpectedly. That was before their rush to the hospital in the dark of the night. That was before all their confident expectations went blank, every Technicolor dream erased in just a blink. Who would have guessed it? If only! For the thousandth time, if only!

So, Hannah waited on the steel gurney, alone except for her still, cold child over there across the room -- her child wrapped only in a paper towel for cover in the sink. Hannah shivered. Soon her heart refused to hold even one more drop of grief, as tears overflowed her eyes and would not stop. Real knives could hurt no more than these thoughts that stabbed and cut.

What had she done wrong to see her baby so destroyed? Was this a punishment from God for some fault, recent or long past? Oh, why? Oh, what about her baby in the sink? Tethered still to tubes, Hannah dared not move to save her baby in the sink. Oh, what about her baby in the sink?

Boy or girl? She did not even know. Some mother she was! All she wanted was to keep her baby warm and safe and, even now, to whisper all the mother-words to some small ear, to sing the mother-songs before it was too late.

She needed time -- just time enough to see the little hands, to count the fingers and the toes, to quickly gather up what memories she could save before they scattered in the lonely days of empty arms to come. Oh, for five sweet minutes to treasure up a lifetime to take the place of all the playgrounds and skinned knees and stories in the night. Oh, for just an hour to give the birthday party kisses and the graduation hugs.

Oh, for those few minutes to give a lifetime's love and memorize the face as every parent does. Does he have my chin or yours? Whose ears? What trace of us marks this child's flesh and bone as ours? Whose hands are these, which would have picked the flowers? How Hannah needed then to see her child and so distill a lifetime into minutes! Pennies on the dollar, yes, but treasure all the same.

With swollen eyes and makeup moved by tears, the nurse returned with two small bundles. From the first, she drew a soft pink blanket, no bigger than her hand. She wrapped the quiet baby and brought her to her mom.

Hannah caught her breath. Thumbelina! This baby was so small, so soft, and so lovely! A girl! She had a girl! Like all the parched and thirsty who at last receive a cup, Hannah drank and drank with every sense. She looked and touched and measured, smelled and weighed. She memorized her baby, as mothers always do.

Finally, John came, and together they decided on Susannah for her name. Along with time, the nurse then left this newly grieving family with the other gift -- a gown. In a while, John and Hannah dressed their sweet Susannah all in white and baptized her with tears. They took their pictures, made their plans, and faced the coming day.

Hanna took the blanket home. She kept it with her for some time - at first beneath her pillow through the nights and carried in her pocket through the days. If anyone denied her grief, if only with the eyes, this pink certificate of birth assured her otherwise. Sometimes just to touch it gave her strength to hold her tears for long enough to do the daily tasks of life. Then, in time, in time, she tucked Susannah's blanket safely in a drawer along with other treasured things like Grandpa's antique watch and Grandma's wedding ring.

Ten years have passed since then, and life has changed for John and Hannah, now the parents of three children. Eric was born without a hitch two years after Susannah, and Lizzy came from Russia with a swirl of excitement in an unexpected adoption. Life is good for them, and life is busy. For Eric and for Lizzy, Hannah cheers and cooks and sings, and for her sweet Susannah, Mama does another thing. She makes her baby blankets, sending blessings knit and purled, to the others who will need them to pass softly through this world.

# 4Bs Outreach for Healing

## Blankets ~ Buntings ~ Bonnets ~ Booties

**Why the 4 B's Outreach is important...**Nurses now have a way to provide comfort to grieving families. "Parenting" our special babies is very important for healing. Mistie's story is where Mary Grace, who wrote *Hannah's Hope*, got her inspiration for the piece. Melonese's story is a true *Hannah's Hope* story! <http://www.shareatlanta.org/blanketoflovemenu.htm>



### *Mistie's Story of Love...*

**Sadness:** Somewhere between midnight and 1:00 AM on Dec. 29, 2005, I lost my Angel (pronounced *on-hail*.) Although there were some expressions of sympathy by the nurses, I feel that my daughter was treated like nothing more than garbage. After delivering her, they put her on a cold stainless steel surgical table, covered her up with what looked like a paper towel, put a plastic-lidded container, which looked like an oatmeal container, next to her and left the room. I was so upset, and so in shock, that it did not occur to me to voice an objection or even to pick her up. Sadly, my baby daughter was all alone on that cold table for hours; while I was left in the bed next to the table to recover. I now wish with all my heart that someone would have told me that it was okay to pick her up and hold her. My arms actually physically ached for days afterward because they never got to feel her in them. Also, when the medical staff put my Angel in that container, where did she go? How does a mother get over not knowing where her baby was laid to rest? These thoughts are so painful that sometimes I can hardly bear them.

**Building Peace:** I did not know how to handle the amount of grief and loss that I was feeling, so I went online to find some help. I found SHARE Atlanta. At my first meeting in January, Marcia told me that I could choose from a collection of decorative boxes made by the seniors of CareShare. I chose a blue, star-shaped box covered in tiny white beads because Angel passed four days after Christmas. Later, I put cards and a few other mementoes in the box and placed it in my living room where I spend most of my at home time. Then, I received from SA a tiny teddy bear and a pink bunting blanket. I put the bunting blanket in the box, and put the teddy bear on top of the blanket. I was four months along when I lost Angel, so I never got to set up a nursery, nor do I have very many mementoes. *The box has become Angel's "room" where I can go and remember her.* Mistie Medendorp ~ In memory of Angel Segura stillborn at 17 weeks, December 29, 2005



### *Melonese's Story...*

#### *A soft pink blanket, no bigger than her hand...*

**Since it was Melonese's first meeting,** I asked her where she had heard of SA. She started to reply and then reached for her purse and drew from it the bag that holds our blankets. She opened it and gently took out, what I knew to be, my mother's crocheted tiny pink blanket! I couldn't believe my eyes! She shared that she had received a pretty card, along with this blanket from SA. She said it touched her that the blanket had been made by a SA grandmother in memory of her three grandchildren. She expressed that this grandmother meant a great deal to her and she wished she could know who she was.

**Melonese tenderly removed the tiny blanket** from the packet and explained that it went everywhere with her. She slept with it, if she was upset her husband got it for her, and she carried it in her purse. I shared with her that this was the blanket that my mom had worried might be too small, but mom loved it, and wanted it to be given for a very special baby.

**This was the second time our blankets** had been welcomed back into my home, and the first time that my babies' names had been on the card along with my dear mothers. As I shared this reality to Melonese, the others in the room were also moved by our collective story! Tears and cries of happiness and sweetness filled the room as Melonese and I hugged. A special bond was created. Carrie O'Leary took our picture holding the pink blanket. Later, I called my mother, sent her Melonese's message and filled her heart with joy as well. The love we share comes from our special babies. We bond with them, and if we will, we carry their love forward...*forever.* Marcia McGinnis 7/06



Marcia & her mom,  
Hope Brooks

### *Melonese's thoughts...*

Marcia, I really enjoyed the support group meeting. I felt like I have known you forever. I never thought I would meet the mommy of the children that McKenna's blanket was dedicated to. *Your mother is truly an angel.*

**We picked the pink crochet blanket especially for McKenna** and we placed it in her bed as we took pictures. My husband removed it, and it's been with me every since. Your mom is a blessing. She has unknowingly provided me with such comfort in the darkest time of my life. I don't know her, but I love her. Please let her know that I truly appreciate her. In memory of McKenna Reese Close stillborn at 6 months ~ June 22, 2006