



www.shareatlanta.org

770.928.9603

SHARE Atlanta

Grief Support for parents who have experienced pregnancy or newborn loss.



Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Pin

The Grieving Process is

- initiated by a loss.
- eased by supportive *choices*.
- *normal and necessary for healing.*

We grieve because we loved and lost an important part of us.
 Marcia McGinnis

For Those Few Weeks...

Just those few weeks...
 I had you to myself.
 And that seems too short a time
 To be changed so profoundly.

In those few weeks-
 I came to know you...
 And to love you.
 You came to trust me with your life.
 Oh, what a life I had planned for you!

Just those few weeks -
 When I lost you,
 I lost a lifetime of hopes,
 Plans, dreams, and aspirations...
 A slice of my future simply vanished overnight.

Just those few weeks—
 It wasn't enough time to convince others
 How special and important you were.
 How odd, a truly unique person has recently died
 And no one is mourning the passing.

Just a mere few weeks—
 And no "normal" person
 would cry all night
 Over a tiny, unfinished baby,
 Or get depressed and with-
 drawn day after endless day.

No one would, so why am I?

Susan Erling Martinez
 Copyright 1984 (used with permission)



"A Person's a Person No Matter How Small" Dr Seuss

So many times our grief is diminished by others who believe that, because we never rocked our babies to sleep at night, never sent them off to school or welcomed them back home, we miss them less than we would an older child who died. Remember, your child was a significant person to you, if not to another living soul. The loss of that child is reason to grieve.
 Jennifer Greer -mother of Jesse, Jamie, and Jacob
 SHARE Atlanta 1996

Grief is the emotion felt at the death of a significant person.

Bittersweet...Hello goodbye by Sister Jane Marie Lamb

Pregnancy loss causes... shock, disbelief, and despair...

Dreams of Nightmares...
 What others take for granted has been denied to me.
 My innocence has been shattered,
 my dreams have been taken away.

Teresa Cox 1990
 SHARE Atlanta

For Justin

When I listened to your heartbeat.
 When I saw you on the ultrasound.
 When I felt you move inside me.
 I never imagined...
 How quickly life can change.
 How suddenly dreams can shatter...
 We wanted the best for you.
 Who would have predicted that it was letting go...
 Elaine Yeager 1994
 SHARE Atlanta

SHARE Atlanta helped me cope...to heal...

When I was seeking support after the death of my baby, I wasn't looking for people who would pity me or try to make me "forget." I needed people who would bear part of my pain, allow me to move through my grief, and help me to realize that my feelings were a part of a process. I found this in SHARE Atlanta.

My involvement in the group acted as a buffer. It helped me to cope by offering emotional support, encouragement, and further resources.

Diane Jordan ~ Mother of *Mary Catherine*, 10/85 and *Alex*, 12/88
 Diane now has 4 living children.



You are not alone...

Parents are fortunate to have places to help deal with our pain, and to grieve with others who share the same loss. We are the only ones who know. We are fortunate because *we do not have to walk alone.*

Kathy Malone mother of Scott, '71

Amelia's Dad and Mom - "How SHARE Atlanta helped us heal."



Dear Dads,

My wife and I attended our first SHARE Atlanta meeting two weeks after the loss of our daughter, Amelia. Right away I was aware that we were not alone, and that this was a *safe place to openly discuss our loss and our feelings*.

I consider myself a typical male in that I want to be able to protect my family from any harm. I want to fix problems right away and make the hurt go away. I learned from the meetings and written materials that everyone grieves differently. I also learned that there is nothing set in stone as to when you will get back to normal.

It is important to communicate your feelings with your wife. It is just as important to have someone else to talk with for another avenue of communication. The parent volunteers are a great source either to talk to or to put you in touch with someone you will feel comfortable with.

The statistics show that parents who have a loss of such magnitude often separate. By open communication and working together, you build a stronger relationship with your spouse.

The group introduced us to incredible people with incredible stories. *SHARE Atlanta is about sharing memories, family, faith and hope.*

Thank you SHARE Atlanta for all of your support.
A. Todd Smith - May 2003

Dear Bereaved Parents,

There is no pain so sharp as that of losing a child. SHARE Atlanta addresses not only that unique grief, but also the loss of the dream for that unborn baby.

Only another parent who has had the same loss will truly know how you feel. I would encourage anyone who has had a pregnancy or early newborn loss to seek out the unique support that they offer.

It is an opportunity to tell the story of your loss. A chance to talk about your baby when often you are not able to with other friends and family. Even if you do not share but only listen, you will find that by hearing other people's stories you experience healing. You will know that *you are not alone*.
Melina Smith



Todd and Melina
Melina reads her poem at our 2002 memorial service in our angel garden.

Todd and Melina had a subsequent baby girl, Natalyn, in 2001.

"Pieces and Peace" by Melina Smith

In loving memory of Amelia Claire Smith -April 30, 2000

Being a part of the process of bringing the Angel of Hope to Arlington and to the city of Atlanta was a big part of my healing process. To be an integral part of a meaningful endeavor brought some purpose to a very bleak year. It helped me to fit the pieces of my life back in place.

When a baby is lost your life falls to pieces.
When a baby is lost your mind goes to pieces.
When a baby is lost your family breaks to pieces.
When a baby is lost your heart is torn to pieces.

Merely knowing that the Angel is there brings peace to my life. When I visit and gaze at the angels face, it brings peace to my mind. When I see the beautiful trees and flowers that grace the landscape, it brings peace to my heart. When I lay a memento on my daughter's brick it brings peace to my family.

The SHARE Atlanta Angel of Hope Memorial is a place to go when you have fallen apart and cannot pick up the pieces. It is a place for mothers, fathers, and families to go to find peace.

Pete's thoughts about healing...

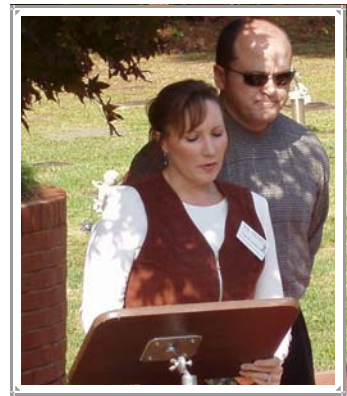
"A person's a person no matter how small." I get teary eyed when I see the plaque near the Angel that has this quote. From my experience and the experiences I've shared with my wife, I know it's true. SHARE Atlanta has offered many hearts and hands to help parents with the loss of our most precious gifts, our children.

It provides Valerie a safe haven with moms who have walked similar paths. It is a place for her to cry, laugh, find comfort and compassion from moms who have also experienced this terrible tragedy. There is no one offering non-experienced counsel. No one who judges. No one who tells you it's now time to move on. I cannot underscore enough the fact that being with other moms in a safe environment is a critical attribute of this group.

As a father, I have benefited too. Men, let's face it, we are the fixers. We are the ones to make it all better. Yet, in this situation, we are powerless. Having met other dads, I know that I am not alone with my thoughts of not being able to fix this situation. Yes, it's okay to cry. That in and of itself helped me.

Am I a SHARE Atlanta advocate? Absolutely! Would I recommend the group to other families? Without question! SHARE Atlanta has been, and I'm confident will continue to be, *a light of hope on those very, very dark nights.* Please continue to carry your *wonderful message of hope and healing.*

Pete Scholovich~In Memory - Megan & Kathryn. Subsequent baby, Jack-2002.



Valerie and Pete at Memorial



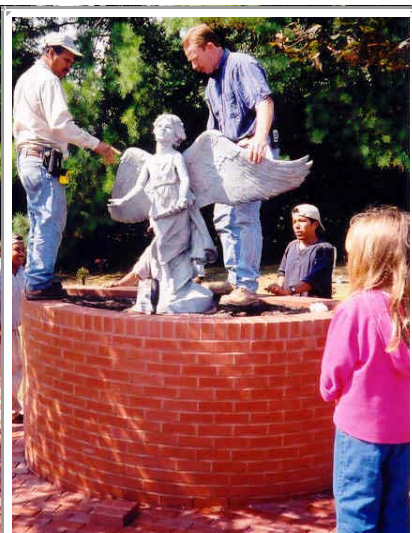
Fathers have been a vital part of SHARE Atlanta's outreach since 1984.

They make us strong by being on the front lines and by supporting the women who volunteer. Fathers have provided: childcare, financial support, and "man-power" in getting things built or accomplished (copies made, pictures taken, transporting materials, website online, building our angel garden, WalkAmerica, connecting with newly bereaved fathers, getting their spouses and themselves to meetings and events).

Our parent-led, mutual-help support group shines because the fathers have embraced our mission.

Father's Grief - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/fathersgriefmenu.htm>

SHARE Atlanta's Fathers in Outreach...



Joe Keen with his crew as Abby Gipson helps welcome home our angel. '01



Roger and Taylor Deane and Carrie and Jeff Jones participate in our 1996 memorial service.



Jim and Pam Renner led a group in Morrow for numerous years.



Devon and Nikhol Jackson are an active SA couple.



Roary and LaWanda Lee read for memorial service 2004.



Leon, Aaron and Joel McGinnis participate in a memorial service.

“My Very First SHARE Atlanta Meeting..” Kathleen Blum...Volunteer with SHARE Atlanta

When I walked into my first meeting, Lynne Anderson’s group, I was extremely nervous and uncomfortable. I’d never been to any type of support group before and had no idea what to expect.

As people told their stories and as each person spoke, and I heard the pain and sorrow in their voice, and ...

I know this is going to sound crazy...I felt....

- **connected** to them in some way.
- **validated** about so many of the weird feelings and emotions I’d been having.
- **relieved** that some of the things that had happened to them hadn’t happened to me.
- **unbelievably sad but not at all in a depressing way.**
- **hopeful** because some of the people could actually tell their stories without completely breaking down.

I’ve never cried so hard publicly before or since!!

The First Steps of Healing...

Although, I was completely taken by surprise by my outburst of emotion, I left the meeting, got into the car, blasted the radio, opened the sunroof, and felt better than I had in months. It was as if there were now a light at the end of what had previously been a black hole toward which I felt myself spiraling out of control. I felt an inner peace and calmness come over me which I can still visualize in my mind.

A Gift...

When I feel completely stressed, anxious, or depressed about something in my life today, I can still summon up that feeling. Life is good again!



A support group...or not... What makes our group work...

Can we "make it" without a support group or grief work?

Yes...BUT... as Julie wrote: "I believe everyone here would have made it. The real question is-*who* would we be now if we didn't have SHARE Atlanta. I know that I would be a very different person. I'm glad I'm where I am and not in that other place."

Where will your path lead you?

Very possibly, we have all met individuals who haven't healed after a loss. They have feelings of ongoing denial, resentment or anger. Thus, they interact with others in manners consistent with these internal factors: i.e. grouchy old uncle, fearful Aunt Sue...

Permission to Grieve to Heal..

Many of our members see ourselves as *independent individuals* who decided that the loss of a child was a bigger wall than we ever had to deal with, and we needed guidance. Some may have chosen to quit or not start down a positive path if we hadn't had each other. Together, with encouragement and perseverance, we learned ways to cope and to heal.

Making our baby’s presence meaningful...

Our wish is to honor our baby's memory by making their presence in our life meaningful. Our hope is that our healing will make us stronger and more responsive to those around us. And, as Julie suggests, we ultimately like who we are and where we are when our grieving subsides. Marcia McGinnis 1995



Why SHARE Atlanta is effective for a grieving parent...

- *We are all bereaved parents* who appreciate the time and effort it takes to grieve.
- *We understand the grieving process.* The facilitator and other parents further along in the healing process provide hope and guidance for those who are newly bereaved.
- *Mutual support helps us to heal.* As parents become friends, mutual respect and trust flourish based on common experiences and knowledge; coping ideas are embraced.
- *Choices are important* for healing. Special programs, memorial services, our memorial garden and bricks, workshops, interviews.
- *Growth based on need.* We continually refine our programs to better embrace healing.

Our website extends these concepts beyond the Atlanta area - to the entire Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Community. MM.



SHARE Atlanta Stories...

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

SHARE Atlanta...We didn't think we needed you, but I'm so thankful we have our special SHARE Atlanta friends.

Two weeks after Sean's death we received a call. My husband began sharing our experience. I heard him crying, laughing and listening. I wondered what friend he could be talking to. It was a friend from SHARE Atlanta. I was shocked at the emotions he expressed to this stranger.

He suggested that we might attend a meeting. I felt that we had enough support from those around us and were coping just fine.

The night we decided we might attend, we both were tired. We weren't depressed. Why should we go and get depressed?

Fortunately, we decided to go. When we walked into the room, a member hugged me and said, "You made it over the threshold." How did she know it was hard for us? Within 15 minutes the question was answered. She knew it was hard because she had been there and felt the pain.

*SHARE Atlanta isn't a group of strangers. They are a unique group of friends who know the feelings. They *listen* with understanding and identify *with* your feelings. One lesson from Sean's death is that friends are important. I thank God for giving us the courage and strength to bond with our special friends.*

Janice and David Whitcomb 12/88.

SHARE Atlanta group with 11Alive's Wes Sarginson....



What the Women's Group has meant to me....

I attended my first meeting 5 weeks after losing my son. I cried and made an occasional comment. I learned that it was okay to cry and to grieve. I heard other mothers express feelings that I had, too. I was not crazy!

SHARE Atlanta came into my life at a time when I wondered how I could continue to go on. The women showed me that not only could I continue on, but that they were there to support me. Leah Blurton, Cole's mom 12/13/00-12/14/00
Clay and Leah celebrated the arrival of Katie in 2003.

Thank you so much for the support.

I truly believe that I would not be here holding my daughter, Jasmine Alyssa, if it wasn't for SHARE Atlanta giving me the support and listening ear that I needed when Jade died. Thank you for being there. You guys do a wonderful job. Sakjina and Clarence Hanson December 2000.

SHARE Atlanta is such a vital ministry to hurting parents of every creed and walk.

Grief knows no ethnicity or wealth or poverty. Coping with grief without the support of friends through an organization like SHARE Atlanta is more than most of us can carry.

Bob Sullivan, Father of six
Four in heaven and two living.

When I attended my first SHARE Atlanta meeting, I felt as if my world was in pieces.

I suffered my third miscarriage, left my husband shortly afterwards, and moved to Atlanta. I had no one to turn to. Friends could not relate to the emotional pain that I was in.

I was at a point that I was considering suicide. I called a hotline. They suggested a grief support group.

That night I found the website for SHARE Atlanta, and my healing began. I cried as I read the articles. I realized for the first time that the feelings I was having were normal. There wasn't something wrong with me. I was shocked to read stories that described exactly how I felt.

I sent for a Parent Packet.

My first group was the candlelight ceremony. I softly cried through much of the meeting. The lady sitting next to me simply put her hand on my back and left it there until I was calm. She didn't say a word. She didn't have to. Her touch was full of comfort and compassion. They also gave valuable information about coping with the upcoming holidays .

At my second meeting, I talked more. I had found the support that I needed.

God directed my path to SHARE Atlanta - the meetings and the website. One member said that we belong to a club that none of us ever intended to join. She is so right. I thank God that I have these women to turn to because they are the only people who can support me through my grief.

Anonymous— October 2002

A Circle of Love and Support...

Please join us...

Healing takes patience.

As time passes, grieving parents have conflicting feelings. They look at the calendar, and see that it has been a certain length of time since their loss, and they wish to be healed. Often, in their effort to be better they *deny* their true feelings of grief. In that denial, they may not seek the support needed for healing.

Groups bring relief and comfort.

Parents who join us over a period of time realize that they are not alone in their confusion and pain. It is a relief to talk to others who really understand. *Everyone* in our group has lost a baby. *Together* we provide support for surviving these difficult times. Whether it has been 2 days or more than 10-15 years, we are here to support your efforts.

Parents help parents.

As members heal they are an important *link* to parents who are working through their grief. In the past, they gained insight and comfort from parents who were further down the road. Now, their supportive guidance helps others begin or continue their walk. This outreach is what makes our group special and unique.

We are blessed that we offer "live" groups in the Atlanta area. I have e-mails from around the world wishing they could form "face to face" relationships with other grieving parents.

The people make our group viable.

While others don't totally comprehend your efforts to survive the loss of your baby, we do understand every moment of your walk. You are important to us; that is the reason we keep SHARE Atlanta as a significant option for healing. Marcia McGinnis 2003

Dear Marcia,

I had a dream last night. I was at a gathering in a community center. There were long tables spaced out along the walls. On each table was a small sign that had a month on it. ***I knew SHARE Atlanta was responsible for the get-together, but there were no large signs to say so.***

Each table represented a month, and parents could put anything on them. For babies that had died they could put memorial pieces, poems, etc. For living children they could put gratitude pieces. I found "January's table" for Matthew, and realized I needed to find "November" for Lukey.

When a sad person needed support, the happy person would quietly go talk to them. At one table I saw a lady crying and putting a folded piece of paper in a slot of a white shoe box. At the same table there was another woman who was quiet, but she wasn't sad at all. She was respectfully quiet about her happiness.

It was really a surreal, nice and quiet, peaceful dream.

I woke up and realized that this is how SHARE Atlanta works-behind the scenes, never sensational or ostentatious or looking for recognition. *Always present to help whomever needs it—newly grieving or "oldies" like me.*

I can't believe it's been 4 years. You all mean so much to me. You helped me tremendously and, more than that, *linked* me to two of my best, lifetime friends.

I love you, Robin, Luke & Matthew [Clay] 2003



Clarence, Sakina, Katie, Jennafer, Nicole

Healing...
*we will never forget
our special babies...*

*We wish you~
hope ~ peace ~ healing*



Pam and her son, Kyle

Healing Happens....

Keeping your options open along the "path of healing" makes it possible..

Does healing really happen? For parents who are in the midst of their grief, it usually seems unlikely. Parents interpret the statements, "You'll never get over it." or "It will be with you for the rest of your life."- as meaning that healing really will not happen. The fear that the pain will always be there intensifies their grief.

Healing happens if we let it. It is an *option* that we have to *work* towards. It doesn't usually happen by itself. The pathway varies between men and women and for different individuals. We never have to like what has happened to us. Nor do we wish to suffer for the rest of our lives. So, we must find ways to cope, resolve, and make life meaningful again. This is "doable" with ongoing efforts and a better understanding of the grieving process.

Options and Hope: *Our hope* is to gradually release the fear, confusion, and pain of grief. We accomplish this with the aide of various options. Slowly, we embrace new choices, reactions, and feelings that help us to move along our path. As these transitions and changes happen, they can *enable* us to carry the *love* we have for our child forward into all that we do. As SHARE Atlanta mom, Nikecia, expressed to me, "Healing does eventually happen; however, it is a *choice*, and it comes in little spurts and pieces."

Remembering: A major source of healing comes as we *remember* our babies. We do this through our mementos, outreach, and words. During anniversaries, the holidays, and outreach activities, parents' expressions in writings capture their thoughts and emotions about their loss and the special place their baby holds in their ongoing life. When we read these pieces, we find in their words the very feelings that we are moving through. We realize that we are not alone. Then, we can proceed in our own healing efforts with more confidence. Marcia McGinnis 2005

Grieving & Healing - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/navgrief.html>

JoAnn's Diary: Grief and Healing - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/joanndiarya.htm>



Healing...

SHARE Atlanta is a safe haven to:

- *learn how the grief process heals us.*
- *understand that men and women grieve differently.*
- *ventilate feelings and reactions.*
- *realize others are experiencing similar reactions. We are not alone.*
- *learn that feelings of being inadequate, helpless, & guilty are normal.*
- *learn coping ideas. Share mementos.*
- *make positive choices.*
- *form a better understanding of self and significant relationships.*
- *heal because our baby's presence will always be special.*



SHARE Atlanta mom, *Kimberly Schulte*, shares this beautiful portrait she had made of baby Greyson and his siblings, Ashley and AJ. The artist created this with photos of the three children. Kim also had a doll made in Greyson James' memory (1/21/04).

Websites for Creating Memories:

- * <http://www.shareatlanta.org/copingskillsmenu.htm>
- * <http://www.portraitsbydana.com>
- * <http://www.braceletsofhope.com> Kim Shiflett, SA mom, expresses her love for her babies in her beautiful memorial jewelry & key chains.
- * http://www.sherwoodsforkids.com/sonogram_frames01.htm Frames for sonograms
- * <http://www.starregistry.com/aisle2.html> Name a Star after your baby.
- * <http://www.miraclebabydolls.com/> Memorial dolls that look just like your baby.



Jennafer Evans made this memory box for Katie..both SA moms.

SHARE Atlanta ~ Ongoing Healing Activities...

His Candle

*I light his candle
to acknowledge his life.
And I say his name
and that I miss him.*

*I wonder if it's celebration enough
for what he means to me.*

*..So I light his candle
with peace, joy, sadness and love
Content with the
knowledge...
that he is with me always
because he is in my heart.*

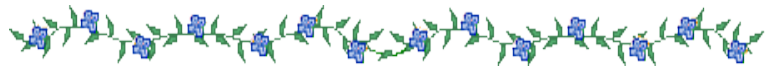
*This candle burns in memory of
Justin Paul Branch, July 31, '91
Julie Branch, his mom*

Women's Candlelighting Third Wed. in November

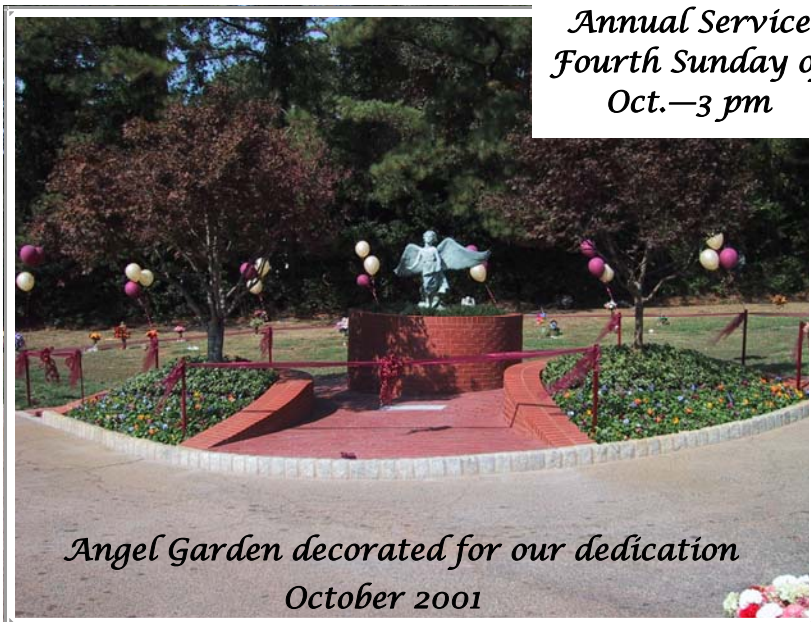


We will never forget our baby's presence in our life's journey. The flame reminds us of the love we feel for them; a love that carries us as we continue down our path. We gradually see in the flicker hope and peace for the future.

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/navmemorials.htm>
Online memorials; Information about Memorial Services

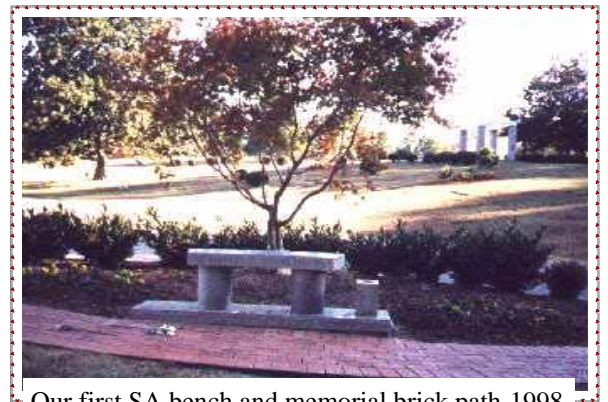


SHARE Atlanta's Angel Garden with Memorial Brick Path-



*Annual Service
Fourth Sunday of
Oct.—3 pm*

*Angel Garden decorated for our dedication
October 2001*



Our first SA bench and memorial brick path-1998

The SA pathway and garden are incredible.

I am from Ohio. I used to get a feeling of peace when I visited my father's and grandparent's graves. It is hard not being able to go to that cemetery. It is as if my security blanket is gone. We had Kylie cremated. It is a wonderful garden with Kylie's memorial brick. I love to "visit" with her and the other children.

Jana LaFlair SHARE Atlanta 2000
Details in our Angel Brochure or
<http://www.shareatlanta.org/angelmnu.htm>
Order a memorial or keepsake brick.

Comfort

The Angel of Hope is where I come not only to grieve, but to find peace and comfort. For myself and others that have had miscarriages or were not able to bury our children, this is a place - other than our homes—where we can remember and honor our special children.

Angela Johnson

Proud mother of one of God's special angels ~ Gwendolyn Gerforme

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/futpgisangela.htm> Angela's Diary

"Outreach for Healing"

*Comfort and Healing
as we remember and honor
our special babies.*



4Bs/Blankets of Love

Blankets and baby clothes are made by our members and friends-from around the country. These along with a card about SHARE Atlanta are given to hospitals to comfort bereaved parents. Many join us. SA mom, Kelly Mishkoff, began this outreach in memory of Zachary and Jeremy. CareShare Exchange seniors, and groups from churches, schools, etc. join us in memory of *all* of our children.



Festival of Trees "Memorial" Tree

Memorial ornaments are donated by our parents. Our babies' names are on the tree and in a written litany. Over 100, 000 people attend the festival. Trees are sold for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Donations to Foster Care Shelter (Begun by Phillis Almgren in 1998 and continued by Christie McGraw)

Do you have free samples of formula? Do you have gifts that people gave to your unborn child that break your heart to look at? Foster Care Support Foundation is a non-profit, all volunteer community service organization dedicated to providing for foster children. The items needed include: formula, diapers, clothing, toys, books and baby equipment.

"We remember our baby by giving toys or clothing that would be appropriate for Michael if he was still with us. This is especially meaningful during holidays or on his anniversaries." Colleen '99
Bring items to SHARE Atlanta Meetings and Events.



SHARE Atlanta's annual "Walk to Remember" *Making our baby's presence meaningful.*

Jennifer Greer began this outreach in '98. We walk in the annual March of Dimes "WalkAmerica." Since 2003, we have raised over \$60,000 for programs that support our Pregnancy & Newborn Loss Community's issues. We have won 8 awards. The most cherished reward is the hope for a better future for families.

Katie about WalkAmerica...

"I'm glad that we are all able to come together and make a difference for babies. And, also walk to remember the ones we have lost. Getting involved with SHARE Atlanta and March of Dimes has helped me to heal." Madison's Mom, 2001

<http://www.shareatlanta.org/outreachmenu.htm> for details



**2nd Place National Family Team
Out of 9000!**

Which meeting to attend?

The *Women's* group includes mom and any woman she might wish to have join her. The *Men and/or Women's* groups are open to moms, dads and supportive relatives or friends.

Mom attends by herself when dad needs to "take a rest" from discussions. Parents find that hearing from other couples who are experiencing similar reactions helps lower their stress levels in their relationship.

When do parents attend meetings?

Some parents attend a meeting the week of their loss; others wait several weeks, months, and even years. Many visit regularly and stay a year or so while others move in and out as the need arises. Often parents visit annually on their baby's anniversary or due date.

We welcome and encourage you to do what your heart tells you to do. *Healing happens gradually.*

What to bring

Yourself and if you want - a supportive friend or relative and any mementos, writings, poems, etc. that you wish to share.

What can I expect at a meeting?

Our goals for our meetings include *getting acquainted* and *understanding* the grief process and *coping ideas*. Parents have opportunities to share parts of their story or some of their mementos. As we share our similar, though unique, experiences, we find strength in our common bond and desire for healing.

The topic of the evening is used as the *basis* for discussion. A brief booklet is given to each member. Though the topics are covered twice per year, there are ten different *Topic Packets*. Group dynamics vary at each meeting making for varying discussions.

Parents are encouraged, but never forced to share.

Being with others that understand and care is often all that is needed for some of our newer members. Because of the common bond of losing a baby, the people in our groups identify with each other and feel comfortable to share.

Special and Difficult Occasions

Anniversary, due date grief, and holidays are focused on as needed. We offer written materials for these times.



Meeting Guidelines

- Feel free to share or not share.
- Each experience is unique and valid. No one is here to criticize or analyze.
- Respect and support is important.
- Because personal feelings are often discussed, what is shared within the group is kept there.
- "Brainstorming" to better understand what is happening is welcomed. Realizing possible choices brings gradual resolution.
- With our SHARE Atlanta pencils, please make notes at any time.
- Should you wish to share a bad experience please do so. Please do not name hospitals, doctors, or nurses in your discussion.
- Grief may bring tears. We understand your feelings. Tissues are always available
- Positive memories and mementos are shared.
- We regret that babysitting is not available.
- *We explore ways to heal and to make our child's presence meaningful in our lives.*

Meeting Topics

Month One: January & June: *Grief and Secondary Losses*
Loss of: control, role as parent, innocence, identity, security..

Month Two: February & July: *Grief and Emotions*
Grief is about our heart-felt emotions being in control.. shock, anger, denial, depression, & hope.

Month Three: March & August: *Grief and Relationships*
Coping with situations and comments from family, co-workers, and friends.

Month Four: April & September: *Grief and Future Choices*
General medical info., subsequent birth plans, pre-pregnant consultations with high risk doctors or infertility doctors supported, timing of decision making, setting goals, etc.

Month Five: May & October: *The Significance of You and Your Baby* Permission to grieve, bring mementos, pictures, etc.

Month-November: *Holiday and Seasonal Grief*
Annual Women's Candlelighting during Women's meeting.

December: No grief support meetings

Every Meeting: ideas for - coping, understanding grief, regrouping. Mementos and pictures are always welcomed. Awareness pins offered at meetings and most events.



What a wonderful site you have here!

As a RN and a bereaved parent, I truly appreciate what you are accomplishing with this site. Although it has been 3 years since my loss, at times it feels as if it were yesterday. As I read through other entries on this page I felt an overwhelming sense of SHARED *grief and common support*. Laura Bristol, CT

E-Mail Exchange & Info-Grief and Healing Support - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/stories.htm>

- * Birth experiences
- Father's/Men's Grief Menu
- Sibling Grief
- Grandparent's Grief
- Friends, Family & Co-workers and Grief;
- "First 24 hours and later" What to expect..
- "Allowing Grief to Happen to Heal" What to *do*. Articles on grief process.
- Coping and Mementos Suggestions
- Support for a Memorial or Funeral Service
- Holidays, Anniversaries and Due Dates
- Thoughts After Five Years... and Later (It's never too late to remember..to heal.)
- Subsequent Pregnancy Support - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/subpgmenu.htm>
- Español de SHARE Atlanta & Deutsche Website - <http://www.shareatlanta.org/navforeign.htm>

SHARE Atlanta has developed a very nice site of resources, stories of sharing...etc. Check out their section on "*Descriptions of Medical Information*"--it is **EXCELLENT!** A Place to Remember

Parent Participation: <http://www.shareatlanta.org/parentpart.htm>

- * Forums for Grief, Subsequent Pregnancy and Grandparent Support
- Online Memorial Garden and Candlelightings
- Angel Garden and *Memorial Bricks (order form)*
- *Outreach for Healing Programs* in memory of your baby: "Walk to Remember" with March of Dime's WalkAmerica ~ Foster Care Shelter Donations ~ Festival of Tree's Tree ~ 4Bs~Blankets of Love
- Updates...to "keep up with what SA's members are doing"
- Online Newsletter (archived SHARE Atlanta newsletters)
- Pregnancy Loss Advocacy and October Loss Awareness Programs and Ideas



SHARE Atlanta Memorial Brick
Order Online

Links to online sites supporting: <http://www.shareatlanta.org/navlinks.htm>

- Medical - information for many kinds of losses
- Grief related Groups and Materials
- Book and Catalog Stores (mementos, funeral ideas)

Supportive Topics, Information, and Options: (Main Drop Box)

- Caregiver's Menu with e-mail exchange and information to help their patients or clients
- Types of Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Support Groups & Supporting Each Others' Efforts.

I appreciate all the support I received after my miscarriage. I submitted my experience called "The Beating Heart" describing my pain and hopelessness. *I received so many words of comfort and support from people with similar circumstances.* It has been a year, and I am pregnant!! I am so grateful for your site, as it got me through one of the most difficult times of my life. Thank you again. God Bless, Kim – Holland, MI



Advocacy and Awareness

We work to strengthen the *connections* between bereaved parents and the community.

More entries <http://www.shareatlanta.org/shareatatlanta.org/html>



Angel's Dedication in 2001

Wes Sarginson, emcee, anchor for 11Alive, Marcia McGinnis, co-founder of SA, Richard Paul Evans, keynote, author of The Christmas Box

- **Emory Stillbirth Study**, 10.05 & 4.07. Presented materials & mission. Gave 4Bs packets for Study's parents.
- **Southern Regional Hospital**, 9.06 "What to do/say and not to do/say" "Secondary Losses and Grief" Provided 4Bs packets.
- **Grief, Grieving and Grief Support Conference**, 4. 06. Partnered with Healthy Mothers; Healthy Babies & others to plan program. "Grief after the Loss of a Child" Program funded by Morehouse Medical College.
- **CDC**, Spring 06. Provided materials and information. 6 SA members talked with representatives from CDC.
- **Stephen's Ministry**, Norcross First United Methodist Church , 11.05. "SA and Healing" "A very professional, informative and compassionate presentation."
- **Rockdale County Hospital**, '04: "Parent Grief and SHARE Atlanta."
- **Cascade Methodist Church**, '02-3 "Working Through Grief"- Parents from newly bereaved to 15 years plus joined us and began to heal. Mementos were made and given to the parents.
- **The Compassionate Friends**, '89. "Grief and Healing" - "Thanks for your priceless time and loving support."
- **National SHARE Conference**, '93, '97, '98. "How to Help Your Group to Grow" & "Making Memories."
- **Prospective counselors**, '95. Dept of Mental Health and Human Resources/Georgia State. "Grief after the Loss of a Child"- "Presentation was undoubtedly the high-point of the class to date. I was impressed with your knowledge, professionalism, and ethics."
- **"Shattered Dreams" workshop**, '95. Joy & Marvin Johnson at Georgia Baptist. "Lots of good information about the importance of support groups for bereaved parents."
- **Hospitals & Organizations**: Since 1985, we have provided in-services for sixteen hospitals, some several times. Many use our materials. Eastside ~ Cobb, Kennestone ~ Crawford Long ~ Eggleston ~ Scottish Rite ~ Gwinnett ~ N. Fulton ~ Northside ~ Piedmont. RBA & Southeastern Fertility Institute ~ Resolve ~ Emory & Kennesaw's School of Nursing

SHARE Atlanta mom



Sakina on radio 98.5 FM
Suzi Marsh 03

Examples of our Television, Radio and Newspaper Outreach - members in italics "How SHARE Atlanta Helps"

- **Atlanta Journal-Constitution**, "Remembering Small Souls" by Helena Oliviero. Miscarriage, loss, medical & emotional support. Dr. Toledo interview stated support of SHARE Atlanta. *The Keens, Jennifer Greer and Marcia McGinnis*. Picture of angel and bricks. 10.03
- **11 Alive Community Service Award**: *Marcia McGinnis* awarded the *Community Service Award and American Institute for Public Service Jefferson Award*. Hosted by Wes Sarginson. 4.01
- **Cable News Network**: *Parenting Today* with Pat Etheridge *SHARE Atlanta's support group members* shared about grief, memories, and mementos as well as subsequent pregnancy issues. 3.97
- **People to People (Channel 2)**: Jocelyn Dorsey with *Karen Gipson and Jennifer Greer*. 10.97
- **Channel 2: Health Special**: "Infertility, Miscarriage and Support Groups" by Diana Davis. *SHARE Atlanta parents* with the focus on *Joe and Sally Whitt*. '94
- **TBS: Between the Lines**: *Marcia McGinnis* was the *TBS Super Citizen of the Week* for her work with SHARE Atlanta. Lori Daniel. '92
- **The Dunwoody Crier**: "Angel figure to soothe grieving parents" by Kelly Como - Angel pictured with *Polly Keen* 11.01
- **The Dekalb Neighbor**: Subsequent Pregnancy group. *Taylor Deane and her family, Roger, Rachael, and Robert*. Fall '97
- **The Atlanta Journal/The Atlanta Constitution**: "Infant deaths a special loss for parents" 4.94
- **The Gwinnett County News**: "Working through the grief" by Kathy Flanigan-Cave 2.88 *Candy*

SHARE Atlanta is ...

- for families who have experienced ectopic, miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn loss.
- a *volunteer*, parent-led, *self-help* or mutual-help group.
- a nonprofit organization since 1984.
- nondenominational; no fees.
- funded completely by tax deductible donations.
- supportive of over 500 parents



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