

SHARE Atlanta's 22 Year's Story in Pictures

A pathway of love and support ...

People make our group viable...

EVERY person is important in a group such as SHARE Atlanta. Through the years members have held each other together by supportive words and outreach. Many also give time and energy to make SA's outreach and memorial programs a reality for members in our group. This defines the meaning of a mutual-self help support group.

This picture timeline highlights the events and programs that have helped to make SHARE Atlanta an important resource for our community. These have been accomplished as we honor our baby's precious memory. Our mission is to provide a safe haven for future parents who will move through the tragic death of their baby. We understand how important it was for each of us to be with those who had experienced a similar loss. In our volunteering, we preserve the kindness that helped us to heal. Marcia McGinnis, Co-founder and President of SHARE Atlanta 2007



1985: Our first official group meeting was on 1.85, and these are the first memorial candles in Dec. '85.



1986: First Baby Reunion was in February and evolved to Family Reunions as members brought older children as the years passed.

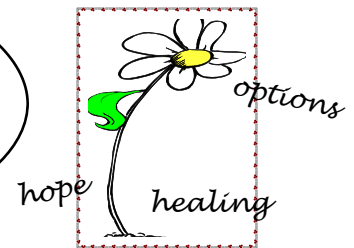


1986: Informal inservices began and continued in the 90s with radio, television and newspaper coverage for advocacy and awareness.



1994: Our logo was created because we needed a logo and tag line for our newsletter and our increasing number of brochures and booklets that we had written since the mid 80s.

Pregnancy and Newborn Loss
Grief Support Group



1989: First Memorial service, at Springdale Park, on Ponce De Leon was a "Walk to Remember" and a tree planting on October 15.



1990s: Volunteer retreat weekends or Saturdays to work on SHARE Atlanta's path, to educate our leaders, to refresh our bonds of friendship, to relax and have fun.



1996: SHARE Atlanta's first annual Memorial Celebration in May was at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church.



1997: www.shareatlanta.org: SHARE Atlanta's website opened doors for grieving parents around the world. Our forums came later.



1997: Garden and bench in Babyland at Arlington Memorial Park is dedicated. WXIA anchor Wes Sarginson does a segment on the Volunteer of the Week.



1998: Outreach for Healing programs begin with donations to charities in 1998, and continue with our first & annual March of Dimes Walk in 1998.



1998: "Pathway of Healing" with memorial bricks is dedicated.



1999: "For our 15th anniversary, we felt a quilt was an appropriate analogy for the way we are putting the pieces of our lives back together to heal so we can slowly go down the path of *what will be* in our lives." JG



2001: Some of the SHARE Atlanta members, at the ground breaking ceremony, who helped coordinate the building of the SHARE Atlanta angel garden during 2000 and 2001.



2004: Festival of Trees Tree Topper... Outreach for Healing continues as SHARE Atlanta raises around \$1000. for the healthcare system with our first "Forever in our Hearts" memorial tree.



October 21, 2001—Angel of Hope garden dedicated. Richard Paul Evans, author of The Christmas Box, gives the keynote address and Wes Sarginson of WXIA emcees the service at Sandy Springs Methodist Church. A Walk to Remember, led by Joel McGinnis, a SHARE Atlanta bagpiper, moves the celebration to the garden at Arlington Memorial Park's Babyland. Flowers are laid in the angel's arms and balloons are released.



2005: 4Bs "Blankets of Love" Buntings, Bonnets and Booties- an Outreach for Healing project by parents.



2006-07: SHARE Atlanta "Walks to Remember" our babies with **March of Dimes** and is **Top Family Team** Downtown & Nationally placed in Top 5 Family Teams—out of 9000 Teams!!

*Each step of the way...
people's outreach makes the difference.*



Pregnancy and Newborn Loss
Grief Support Group

The Circle of Healing..
Grief begins at the Beginning..
Caregivers begin the
Process of Healing..
SHARE Atlanta Continues It



Grief after a Pregnancy or Newborn Loss - SHARE Atlanta's Outreach...

“Permission to Grieve”

- Grief begins at the beginning. It begins as soon as we know the baby will die or has died.
- By presenting grief *material* and encouraging grief *activity* (acknowledging and, when possible, “parenting” their baby) - from the very beginning, we give parents "permission to grieve."

Generally, society, which includes the parents and everyone around them, dismisses pregnancy and newborn loss and encourages moving-on. This reduces the significance of the loss in the eyes of the parents thus lessening their ability to openly grieve. They feel pain, but deny it because everyone else does. This fact tied to the impact of initial shock, may cause the parents to respond in a manner that is not consistent with what is thought as “normal” grief reactions.

Embracing Parenthood

The process of grief and healing can begin when the caregiver embraces their *parenthood* with mementos and affirmation toward their baby. *SHARE Atlanta's materials given with our 4 Bs' baby blankets and buntings*, etc. further validate for parents that their baby is special. Our Survival Kit reassures them that their feelings of grief are normal and acceptable after a pregnancy or newborn loss. Our packets clearly demonstrate that our losses are significant because a group was formed that offers programs in support of grieving and healing after such a loss. It makes the parents immediately aware that they are *not alone* in their pain, confusion, and subsequent grief.

By sharing our materials, the caregiver gives the *option* and the *responsibility* of seeking grief support to the parents. Then, the opportunity for support is available to the parents at any point along their grief journey. They have been made aware of SHARE Atlanta's presence. Even if they choose to initially discard the materials, they know there is a group to connect to. If no material is given, this particular path of grieving may be closed to them. Statements like this sentence from a recent email should not happen “...after *many* telephone calls I was *finally* given your group's name and number.”

Together, SHARE Atlanta and caregivers can provide hope through ongoing support that starts *at the beginning* of the parent's journey. Opening doors is a positive healing mechanism –one that we can mutually provide. Marcia McGinnis, President of SHARE Atlanta

SHARE Atlanta's Programs - reach over 400 parents quarterly...

- Survival Kits (English and Spanish) - initial contact with SHARE Atlanta.
- Parent Packet - parent requests by phone or email. Details our group ie. directions to meetings, programs etc..
- Groups (men/women; women; subsequent pregnancy group— with topics & booklets each month)
- Outreach Programs (March Of Dimes - in last 6 years SHARE Atlanta has raised over \$100,000 & 9 awards- Nationally placed Top Family Team 2 times. We “Walk to Remember” our babies; donations to Foster Care Shelter; Festival of Trees –SA Memorial tree raises funds for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.; 4 Bs-Blankets & outfits for babies in hospitals)
- Memorial bricks in our Angel Garden - (\$20 Keepsake; \$25 garden brick & memorial fund to help those who can't afford a brick)
- Special Services and Workshops: Memorial - (in October) and Candlelighting (in November and other months); October Awareness, authors, caregivers,
- Mini-Newsletters - online as needed
- Written materials - Survival Kits, Parent Packet, Grief booklets and brochures
- 400 page Website with Forums Links to medical and grief support,
- "Advocacy and Awareness" for medical and emotional support and research. (Brochure, awareness pin, October Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness programs, involvement in research, ie. NIH's Stillbirth Study, MOD's walk...





Pregnancy and Newborn Loss
Grief Support Group

SHARE Atlanta Helping Parents Heal Since 1984

770.928.9603
www.shareatlanta.org
Est. 1984



SHARE Atlanta's Angel Memorial Service

SHARE Atlanta's Mission Statement

- To provide a support system for gradual healing for bereaved parents who have suffered a pregnancy or newborn loss. We will include an outreach program for parents, their family, friends, and caregivers.
- To make sure that bereaved parents, in their quest for healing, are offered the options we provide. *Choices are important.* Parents should not have to *hunt* for our group. It is painful to want support and not know where or how to get it. We understand that not every bereaved parent will use our program, but by offering our information to each parent, s/he can decide when and if to join us.
- Advocacy and Awareness of the Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Issues (both emotional and medical).



SHARE Atlanta is ...

- A grief support group for those who have experienced pregnancy or newborn loss (*ectopic, miscarriage, stillborn, or newborn death up to one month or for a parent whose baby never went home from the hospital or whose short life was filled with many hospital stays.*).
- Volunteer, parent-led "mutual" support group since 1984
- Nonprofit and supported completely on tax deductible donations
- Nondenominational
- Free for participating parents
- Supportive of over 600 parents annually

SHARE Atlanta's Goals for parents

For the parent to realize that Grief..

- is a normal process - "It's okay to grieve."
- takes time and patience - "Move at your own pace."
- causes change - "As we make new choices, we begin to heal."

For the parent to realize that Grief Work can lead to..

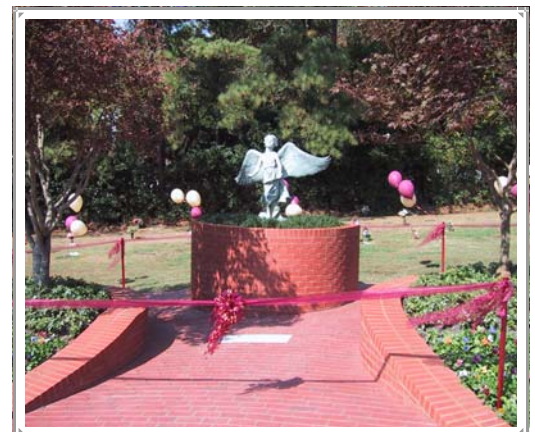
- new coping skills and choices.
- new understanding of self, marriage, and significant relationships.
- hope, growth, and healing.

We always remember

"Our babies are special and so are we.
Our babies will be *Forever in our Hearts.*"



*SHARE Atlanta's
Memorial Brick
&
Angel Garden*





Advocacy and Awareness

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

More entries <http://www.shareatlanta.org/shareatlprograms.htm>



SHARE Atlanta Members
March of Dimes 2007

- **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 ~ Egleston ~ 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*. Host- 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* '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



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