

SA's Blanket of Love
"Wrapping our babies in love..."
In loving memory of our special babies...
whose brief presence
touched our hearts forever.



Kelly and Alan Mishkoff expressed how comforting it was to hold their sons in tiny blankets that the hospital provided. We agreed, and SA's "5Bs" outreach was created. To get us started, their friend, Jennifer Carter, suggested the easily made fleece blankets for babies who would be held for a brief time while "bittersweet hellos and sad good-byes" are said.



Blankets, Buntings, Bonnets, Booties & Bracelets Given as Special Mementos..

After the items have cradled their baby, these can be kept by parents as a special and comforting remembrance of their baby. A small card is included in the gift packets that recognizes the person who made them and tells about SA. The family will know that they are not alone in their experience and that SA members not only care but are ready to support them in their healing journey.



At a SA meeting, as many of our parents do, Allysa shared Ethan's blanket along with a picture of him in it. As we suggest, his blanket, bonnet and booties were not washed. They will forever hold precious memories of Ethan. Allysa and Nathan learned about SA from our gift packets, SA Survival Kits, and the nurses. In 2008, Allysa introduced tiny bracelets to our outreach.

Dear SHARE Atlanta: The "right" sized clothes for Anna meant a lot to our family. It was a hard time for all of us and you were there to ease some of the pain. Thanks for all you do. Reg & Mary Jo



Tiny Bracelets

Tiny Buntings



Mementos for even the Tiniest Baby...

"Sometimes the losses are too early for the little ones to have a gown or booties or, in the cases of ectopic or molar pregnancies, the precious ones aren't seen. I can only imagine had I been given a blanket or a bracelet in the ER or upon leaving how much comfort I would have received. I wish that I could have wrapped and cuddled our little Gabriel. It is my hope that these blankets will bring comfort to parents who suffer early losses." Coretta Monroe 08



Coretta and some of her family have made MANY of our blankets of love in memory of Gabriel- miscarried 11.04. She takes blankets to **Cobb** Hospital.

Parents, when encouraged to, are very grateful that they had the opportunity to dress and hold their precious baby.

Healing happens for those who make these treasures as well as for those who receive them...

Allison's Blanket of Love gifted to Carrie.



Allison made her blanket in memory of her baby, Hannah.

Carrie's thoughts about Evan's 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." Carrie O'Leary

And the Rest of the Story...

Carrie and her mother, **Elaine Freeman**, joined our gatherings and made blankets in memory of Evan for other families.



Grief after a Pregnancy or Newborn Loss The Importance of our "5B's" Outreach...

"Permission to Parent and to Grieve"

- * Grief begins at the *beginning*...as soon as parents know their baby will die or has died.
- * By acknowledging their baby and, when possible, encouraging them to "parent" their baby - from the very first moments - parents are given permission to give their baby the love they feel for their child.
- * "Parenting" may include dressing, cuddling, powdering, photos, etc. Their baby's presence becomes real.
- * Then the grief that parents feel can be acknowledged.

We grieve because we loved.

Grief is often denied...

Generally, society, which includes the parents and everyone around them, dismisses pregnancy loss and encourages moving-on. This reduces the significance of the loss in the eyes of the parents and lessens their ability to openly grieve. They feel pain, but ignore 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 to be "normal" grief reactions. Then, important avenues of grief support are not given to families.

Validation is important. "Parenting" is important.

The process of grief and healing begins when the parent embraces their parenthood by doing those loving responses that every parent does for their child such dressing, swaddling, etc. These tied with- the caregiver, family and friend's further affirmation toward their baby- allows the parent to bond with their tiny baby.

SA's 5B's Outreach packet clearly demonstrates that our losses are significant. They show that a group was formed that offers handmade items and programs in supportive outreach of their family's tragic loss. SA understands their need to love their special baby as they begin the process of grieving. It makes parents immediately aware that they are not alone in their pain, confusion, and grief.

The blankets and baby wear items are important...

Most parents who experience a early loss have not prepared to swaddle their baby. Even though many hospitals are working to change this situation, often a baby is wrapped in whatever is handy in the hospital-a surgical pad, a plastic container, an oversized blanket-none of these are a loving way to hold a tiny baby.

Offer Several Gift Packets

Our hope is that numerous gift items will be readily available so nurses can quickly offer a grieving parent the comfort of several soft blankets and baby wear items. Many parents will change their baby's clothes during their hospital stay. Others will keep some items that wrapped their baby as keepsakes while gently "letting their baby go" by wrapping them in a precious bunting or tiny outfit. These items help support the love that parents wish to share with their child.

Opening Doors for Continued Healing..Begins with the Caregiver..

Statements like this sentence from a recent SA email should not happen "...after many telephone calls I was finally given SHARE Atlanta's name and number."

By participating in our 5Bs Outreach, the caregiver gives the option and the responsibility of seeking grief support to the parents. The parent is aware of our group. They may seek support at any point along their grief journey. Even if they choose to initially discard the written information, they know there is a group to connect to. If no packet is given, this particular path of grieving may be closed to them. Keeping options open is important for healing.

Melonese's Healing Thoughts...



Melonese with Marcia at a SA meeting

"We picked the *pink crochet blanket* especially for McKenna and placed it in her bed as we took pictures. My husband removed it, and it's been with me every since. This blanket has provided us with much comfort in the darkest time of our life.

The packet and nurses led us to SA." McKenna Reese was stillborn at 6 months 6.22.06. Marcia's mother, Hope, knitted the blanket. The Close family welcomed Jackson in 2007. *McKenna's pink blanket was in the delivery room.*

SHARE Atlanta is:

- a grief support group for families who have experienced ectopic, miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn loss
- a non-profit organization since 1984
- staffed and led by parent volunteers
- funded completely by tax deductible donations
- non-denominational; no fees
- www.shareatlanta.org/legacy/main.htm

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SHARE Atlanta (SA)

Pregnancy and Newborn Loss
Grief Support Group

*SHARE Atlanta's 5Bs Outreach
Blankets, Buntings, Booties,
Bonnetts and Bracelets*



A Brochure about the Importance and Use of These Tiny Gifts

*"5Bs"-Blankets of Love
Since 2005
Outreach begun by SA mom, Kelly*



Kelly, her mom, Maureen Franco and daughter, Jessica...
Gathering together SA's
Handmade Gifts for 15 Area Hospitals
In honor of **Zachary and Jeremy**
Stillborn 1.04 and 10.04

