



“No Heartbeat Act”- CBRS

Stories and Poems from some families this will touch.

This booklet is a sampling of poems and pictures that has been gathered from those parents in Georgia who have experienced the death of their baby due to stillbirth. Georgia is number seven in fetal mortality. 1200 babies were reported stillborn in 2003. There are 8 stillbirths out of every 1000 births. Stillbirths claim 70 babies per day in the United States. The CDC is presently doing a Stillbirth Surveillance Study to further clarify these numbers in Georgia.

Nationally, there are about 28,000 stillbirths each year. Our site includes poems and several diaries from around the world that were written by mothers and fathers who have lost their baby due to stillbirth. The NIH is heading up a Stillbirth Study in five locations in the United States. Emory is participating in a local extension of this study that includes eight Atlanta hospitals. Medical advocates have joined parent advocates in a quest to find out reasons and prevention for stillbirth. Some countries as well as 20 states in the US have certificates of birth resulting in stillbirth for those who have experienced stillbirth. We are working to make this important and meaningful certificate a permanent part of Georgia's law.

These poems are a mixture of the pain, the deep love, and the desire to heal that each parent must work through and with - to ultimately and gradually heal. The pictures are the faces of these parents as they are involved in community advocacy programs to support future parents who might experience this type of loss as well as to work to help end stillbirths. Aiding in the healing process is an important goal for parents. We believe that a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth will be an important healing mechanism for families who experience stillbirth.

Sincerely,

Marcia McGinnis

Co-founder and President of SHARE Atlanta: Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Grief Support Group since 1984

In memory of Catherine Marie, Elizabeth Hope, and Seth David McGinnis (All loss too soon; none stillborn)

January 2008

{Forever in our hearts.... }

In the garden of our lives, you bloomed.
In the night sky of our dreams, you shone.
In the music of our hearts, you are loved.

We remember you always

Jennifer Greer

SHARE Atlanta's Newsletter Editor for 10 years

In memory of ~

Jesse David, Jamie Caroline, and Jacob Evan Greer



The Angel Garden, in Arlington Cemetery, Sandy Springs, GA, was created by bereaved parents in memory of their babies. These precious children will be forever in our hearts....

“Forever in Our Hearts” Readings...



Roger and Taylor participating in Memorial Service 1996 where he read his poem for the first time.

No Heartbeat

**No Heartbeat
Nothing else need be said
We cannot find the heartbeat
I am afraid your son is dead**

**Two words that changed our lives forever
Nothing will be the same
Two words that brought us closer together
We hope we won't go insane**

**Our child has died before his birth
People have nothing to say
To us it does not matter
We love him anyway**

**Now we go on with our lives
Strangers ask me everyday
How many children do you have
I don't quite know what to say**

**I tell them I have a son
Who died before he was born
He was truly an inspiration
Now we only can mourn**

**Don't be so sad they say
You are still so very young
It was meant to be, they say
You can always have another one**

**How stupid you are in your world
No understanding for my pain
My child was alive and we loved him
Nothing will ever be the same**

**Now we know we aren't alone
Two words have affected so many
We all love our children
Even when our arms are empty**

**We cannot find the heartbeat
We cannot find the rhythm
Our child has died and left us
We will hold him again in heaven**

**Roger Deane, SHARE Atlanta
In memory of Russell Joseph Deane
Stillborn April 7, 1992**

Rachel, 12, and Robert, 10, are Russell's younger siblings.



Rachel reading her poem at Memorial Service 2005.

Rachel's Poem

**I see him not
For he is gone**

**He lost his life
Before I met him**

**I never knew him
I never kissed him**

**I never saw his eyes sparkle
Because they were born closed**

**No tears ever emerged
No thoughts were ever passed his head
No joy ever found its way to him**

**The only life he knew
Was short and dark
He only lived for a few months
In the dark**

**But I love him
And I always will**

**He is my brother
My Russell**

**Rachel Deane, 2004
In memory of Russell Joseph Deane**



Karen reading her poem at Memorial Service 2005.

My Precious Jonathan William ~ Stillborn April 5, 2001

*At first the tears fell like a relentless storm as the thunder crashed in my soul
I fought day after day to make it through the rain to once again become whole
Each second a battle within me as I survived only from one heartbeat to the next
The thought of living the rest of my life without you seemed impossible to me at best
At times I merely existed, a shell of the person I was before you were gone*

*Months and months went by and the storm became more of a slow and steady rain
My heart ached for you every waking moment and with each breath I took,
My mind constantly filled with thoughts of what you would be doing now
I longed for the joy of hearing you laugh and seeing you smile for the first time
I still could not comprehend why our time together seemed but just a moment*

*The months turned into a year and the rain had become just a light sprinkle
The clouds had begun to lift and the sun slowly peeked through
Shining at times just enough to make me able to laugh again
Inside I still missed you each day, but I smiled more and cried less
as my journey carried me one step at a time, closer to peace and happiness*

*One year has now become over three and the rainbow has come out after the rain
It's colors are bright and beautiful just like the colors you brought to my life
From the tears has bloomed a garden of friends I would never have known without you
I have found an inner strength I didn't even know existed until you came along
Your brief presence in my life has given me more than I ever dreamed possible*

*I know that you are always with me, a part of me, just as I am a part of you
When I tell others about you now, I know they can see you there in my eyes
Any tears shed now are happy ones knowing that someday we'll be reunited in paradise
My angel, I thank God each day for giving me the gift of being your Mother
Having you helped make me the person I am today, because of you I am forever changed.*

All My Love, Mommy

Karen Verner . SHARE Atlanta '04

Nathaniel Verbanac

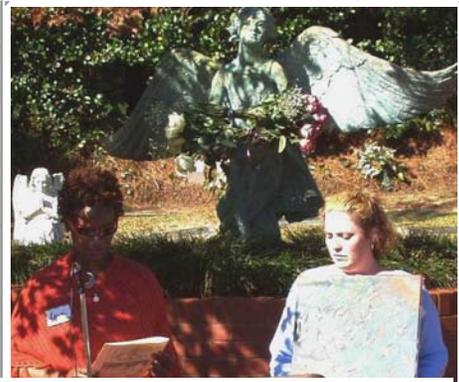
Beloved son of Adrienne and Robert ~ Stillborn 10/30/05

I was only your mother for a short while
But your presence was one of complete style
I loved you from the start
My precious baby, close to my heart
I miss the way you swam in my womb
The way you danced when your papa walked in the room
I never knew one could feel so much pain
Sometimes I think I'll go insane
I find myself always crying
I wonder when it was exactly that you lay dying
I dream about what life would be like if you were near
I yearn for you to just be here
As each day passes by
The hope to understand, I can only try
I miss you, I miss you, I miss you my child
The pain in my heart is never mild
I want you to know I will always love you
And that somehow, someday God will see me through
Love, Mommy
Adrienne Alyce Verbanac
SHARE Atlanta 2006



Adrienne at SA's Walk America for March of Dimes with Eric and Shakina Williams...all have experienced a stillbirth.

I am a Mother, but in a very different way. Kenya Beyah



Kenya (lt) showing her painting in 2005.

When I lost Zari the first feeling I felt was numb. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what I was supposed to do. I felt numb and empty. The only decision I can recall making, is the decision to contact SHARE Atlanta. One of the first lessons I learned from them was that there was no wrong or right way to grieve. The only thing I needed to do was remember that I am a Mother. I also learned that I, too, would come to realize how I would celebrate Zari's life.

For months while carrying Zari, I had thought about how different my next birthday would be. How this birthday would be marked as my first year of being a mother. I looked forward to how that day would leave me feeling. *Well everything was different now.*

The day had come, but how would I mark it? *I am a Mother, but in a very different way.* Then the thought came to me in the dark of the night. "Go to the paint store, pick up everything you need," and it will come. I didn't ask any questions. (Even though I had been on an emotional roller coaster lately, I knew that "thought" to be Spirit speaking to me.)

I set up the easel, put the paint out, and sat and stared. I had never picked up a paintbrush a day in my life. I had no idea what I was doing. Day came and night fell; with me sitting and staring. While doing so, I begin to see it. First I painted blue because it represented the sadness I felt. Then green because it represented the new life that I had experienced. And then, red because it represented the anger I felt. I stared longer. Then I saw the brightness of the Creator's energy represented by bright orange and yellow and I painted. Then amazingly I saw beautiful precious Babies going towards the Energy. The more I stared the more Babies appeared. Everywhere I saw one appear; I painted.

I call this piece *Ascension*—the journey of our babies. In celebration of Zari~ Stillborn 10.24.03.

Blankets Of Love

**In memory of Zachary (January 27, 2004) and Jeremy Mishkoff (November 15, 2004)
Stillborn Sons of Kelly and Alan Mishkoff**

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

**SA Parents and Friends hand make blankets and baby clothes
for newly bereaved families in the hospital.**

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. In her loss of their sons, Kelly 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.

The program now reaches 14 hospitals across the Atlanta area. We thank our parents and friends for this touching and meaningful outreach. Marcia McGinnis



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



Alan and Kelly

Angel Garden for Healing



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

“Pieces and Peace” by Melina Smith

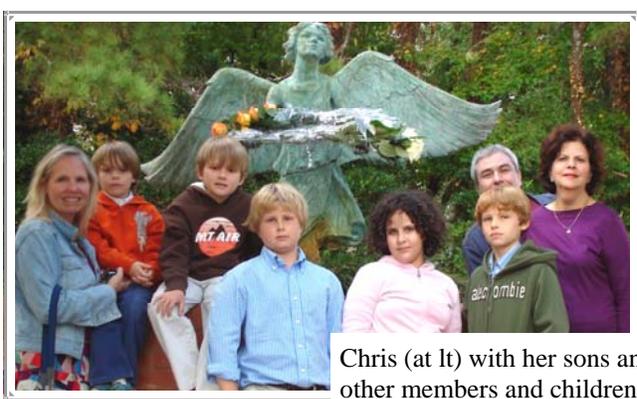
In loving memory of Amelia Claire Smith - Stillborn April 30, 2000

Being a part of the process of bringing the Angel of Hope to Arlington Cemetery (in Sandy Springs) 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.



Chris (at It) with her sons and other members and children at 2006 Memorial Service.

“Nicole was stillborn in February 1993. We were overcome with grief, and only with the help of SHARE Atlanta did we come to peace with her loss. Over time, they showed us how to put meaning around her loss, and to continue to remember Nicole in ways that are special to us.”

“The Angel is a symbol of inspiration, tranquility, and hope for families and friends who have suffered pregnancy and newborn loss. By the angel being in Arlington all who grieve can come to heal.” Chris and Terry Clontz, SA Angel’s Benefactors

Many other parents who had experienced a stillbirth also worked on this incredible outreach.

“MY DAUGHTER, MY BLESSING”

In memory of Evan Elaine O’Leary

Stillborn May 28, 2005



Carrie with her husband, Mike and Evan’s grandparents after reading her poem at 2006 Memorial Service. Evan’s grandparents, Elaine and John, also read.

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



Valerie with Pete reads her poem at the annual Memorial Service.

*If the bricks could talk, what amazing and timeless stories they would surely tell.
Tales of sorrow, despair, and broken hearts. Lives forever changed against
their will - raw, utter sadness and a fragile, unending vulnerability.*

*But the bricks would also tell the story of healing, the story of courage and hope.
A place beyond this earth, warm and safe; a bittersweet peace.*

*They would tell us to hold ever close our precious dreams,
and they would sing the little babies lullabies
to soothe our mending souls.*

Singing sweet songs of love - undeniable love.

Valerie Scholovich, SHARE Atlanta, 2003

*In memory of Megan Elizabeth Stillborn January 17, 2000
and Kathryn Anne Stillborn February 23, 2001*



Pictorial Reflections from Families

Parents who have experienced Stillbirth march with March of Dimes...



Lacey's grandmother, Pat, walks each year with Cindy and other family members, and friends.

"Since the fullterm stillbirth of my daughter, Lacey, on September 16, 2003, my thoughts on EVERY aspect of my life and life in general have all changed dramatically and FOREVER. My thoughts have focused on how can I - a) keep her spirit alive and b) turn this tragedy into some sort of positive. That has been "Helping the March of Dimes Put SA Out of Business"! I want to SAVE babies, all the babies that I can. If I do this, then there is a family out there that doesn't have to go through what we have. Cindy Ivey, TEAM Captain since 2004

Tamera..Top Fundraiser (\$7,555.00) for 2006 March of Dimes... We walk in memory of our babies.

"I've never had the guts to do something like this. I'm doing it in honor of **Kenny** to help *all the babies.*" Tamera

In memory of Kenny ~ Stillborn at 38 weeks ~ February 13, 2006

Lee & Tamera Partis



Parents participate in CDC's Stillbirth Surveillance Study.



Parents presented SA's program and blankets in 2004 (and several times since) for Emory's Stillbirth Study's Program. Janice Daniels (Research Coordinator) and Dr. Hogue, Dir. WWC at Emory are standing on the right.



Moms decorate our Festival of Trees Memorial tree. The tree is sold to raise money for the Children's Healthcare System.



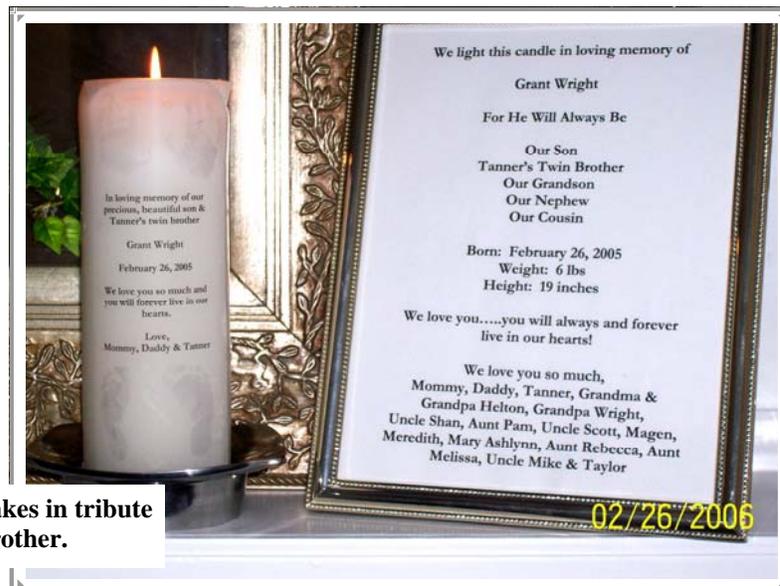
SHARE Atlanta mom, *Kimberly Schulte*, shares this beautiful portrait that she had made of baby Greyson and his siblings, Ashley and AJ. The artist was able to create this with photos of the three children. Greyson Stillborn January 21, 2004.

The Wright's Story of Their Son's Stillbirth



Phil and Debbie with Tanner. Tanner's twin brother was born still. They both were born on February 26, 2005 at 36 weeks. Only Tanner's birth is recognized by the state of Georgia.

Debbie and Philip Wright delivered full term twin boys in February 2005. Tanner is in this picture, Grant was born still. The couple received a birth certificate for Tanner, but could only obtain a death certificate for Grant. Both children were "born" but only one is recognized in Georgia as having been born. The Wrights would like to be able to obtain a CBRS. This would recognize the birth of both sons, and that they both are part of their family's story. A CBRS would bring comfort and closure to this family.



The Wright's special keepsakes in tribute to Grant—Tanner's twin brother.