

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a light blue sweater, is shown in profile, blowing a dandelion seed head. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green grass and a clear blue sky. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Volume 20, Issue 2
Mar/Apr 2011

Sharing

touching lives...

healing hearts...

giving hope...

Topic this Issue:

CHILDREN'S WISDOM

We hope that this newsletter
brings you comfort and hope
for the future.

Dear Friends,

Most children who have a sibling that dies due to a pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life will experience a grief reaction. Parents often ask me, "Will my child be negatively affected by the death of their baby sibling?" I have to say the answer to this question is, "Usually not, if the child's grief is acknowledged and they are given opportunities to grieve." In this newsletter, you will be touched by sibling's stories and poems as well as their parents reflections. We hope you will find some ways to support your child or even a niece or nephew along this journey.

As I worked with my own children and other bereaved families through their grieving tidbits of information have surfaced many times. Children have been some of my greatest teachers along the way. I share with you the following:

Kids Pearls of Wisdom...

- I am little but I am still hurting.
- Don't act like I am not in the room. I overhear your conversations. Talk to me, too.
- Tell me the truth and use proper terms.
- Give me information about choices about being with my deceased sibling, farewell rituals and memory making and I will give an opinion about what I want to do.
- I will ask many questions and some will be repeated but I usually only raise the questions I need the answers to.
- I may state facts about my brother or sister's loss without sugar coating to any one who will listen.
- Children who are grieving can only take so much. Sometimes I take breaks on grieving and need to do fun things.
- I often give hugs and try to comfort you far better than most adults. I won't talk you out of your grief.
- I may need to work my grief out through play or art.
- I may bounce back far quicker from the loss than my mom or dad.
- As I enter each step of development, I may want to revisit our loss and learn more detail about my brother and sister and the loss experience.

Know we are here for you and your dear family each step of the way. As the tulips and daffodils appear during this springtime, may you find a tiny piece of hope..

With hope,



Cathi Lammert, RN
Executive Director



Cathi Lammert, RN
Executive Director



Rose Carlson
Program Director



Stephanie Grant
Development Director



Megan Nichols
Outreach & PR Director



Jeanna O'Leary
Share Group Coordinator



Deb Welsch
Administrative Assistant



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Upcoming Events...

Share Your Knowledge Trivia Night
 Saturday, April 9, 2011 at 6 p.m.
 Machinist Hall
 Bridgeton, Missouri
 Tables on sale now!

9th Annual Angel Ball: Sunset over the Savannah
 Saturday, April 16, 2011 at 6 p.m.
 Saint Charles Convention Center
 Saint Charles, MO
 Entertainment provided by The Fabulous Motown Revue
 For reservations call 636-947-6164.



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SMOKE & FIRE

Written by Carol McMurrich

Life as a babylost mother can seem full of unanswerable questions.

“Is this your first?”

“How many children do you have?”

Or even, in the early days, “How are you?”

Some days, finding the energy to prepare an answer, be it sullen or witty, seems too much. But I had prepared the response to one particular question when my second born, Liam, was only four months gestation: I knew what I was going to tell him when he asked me what had happened to his sister's body.

I had gotten the idea from a little, tattered green book called *When a Baby Dies*. The book contained a short story about a family in England whose third child had passed away. The parents decided to let the older children, who were six and nine years old at the time, decide what to do with the baby's body, which had been placed into a box. They told the children they could return the body to the earth by burying the baby's box beneath the ground, or return her to the air by placing the box on a special fire, which would turn her body into smoke. How simple and lovely they made it sound.

The question of what to do with our daughter's body was huge for me. When the social worker asked if I wanted my baby to be buried or cremated, I slipped from stunned numbness, leaning over my still-pregnant and laboring belly, and began to heave the hugest, deepest sobs. All I wanted to do was bring my baby home. In the end, we chose to cremate Charlotte. This decision was made based purely on the fact that we ourselves would choose cremation over burial, so it only made sense to choose this for our child.

Liam knew that Charlotte's body wasn't here anymore, but he saw her pictures all over her house, so he knew that she once was. Whenever we talked about Charlotte's death, we explicitly divided the body and soul in order to set the stage for my answer when Liam did ask what had happened to her body. We always told him that a person has two parts: the body, which does the moving and the walking and the talking, and the spirit, which does the thinking and the feeling. We told him that when a person dies, their body stops working, but the part that does the thinking and the feeling goes to live in the stars.

Our family doesn't really have a true heaven concept, rather the idea that the spirit is still lurking around somewhere, that sometimes she's here, and sometimes she's there, and we never quite know where she might be.

But, for what seemed like the longest time, he never asked the question: what happened to Charlotte's body?

Finally, when he was three and a half, we were lying in his bed

together one night in the semi-dark, with the sloped ceiling cradling us in his warm, quilted bed. The lullaby CD was playing and we were lying there, just quietly, because he wanted some company.

Out of the darkness he asked, “Do we still have Charlotte's bones?”

This was it. He loved dinosaurs, and he understood that when something is dead, sometimes you can still see the bones.

“No, we don't have Charlotte's bones. Are you wondering what happened to Charlotte's body after she died?”

He nodded, and curled his body a little deeper into the comma of my belly. I took a breath, and gave him the answer that I had spent all these years preparing.

“When a person dies,” I said, “you have the choice to return their body to the earth by burying them, or return them to the air by holding their body over a special fire that turns them into smoke. Daddy and I chose to have Charlotte returned to the air. And because her body wasn't working anymore, it didn't hurt. We still have a little jar with the ashes that are left.”

I stopped explaining, and waited for Liam's reply. I was almost afraid. Would he be horrified? Terrified? There was a moment of silence. Then he spoke.

“Can wood turn into smoke?”

“Yes, honey, it can.”

“Can paper?”

“Yes.”

And that was all. We listed into silence again, the lullabies playing in the dark.

I was reminded once again how simple it is to be a three-year-old, when it seems almost okay that your sister turned into smoke, just like the logs in your fireplace, and where any answer is as good as anything else, as long as your mom is really listening to you and answering the questions that you have.

I hugged him tightly, remembering that the things that seem most complicated to us adults sometimes don't seem so strange to the children around us.

Carol McMurrich lives and writes in Western Massachusetts, surrounded by her husband, two living children, and the spirit of Charlotte Amelia. She runs a community resource and support group for baby lost families.

MEMORIES OF MY SISTER

Written by Maureen Day

I have only a few memories of my sister, Patti; really just glimpses that I recall... jumping rope in the kitchen and getting in trouble, laughing on the couch, seeing her sick lying on my mom and dad's bed. Then, she was gone. I was only 4 years old when she died at the age of eight, unexpectedly from Reye Syndrome - sudden brain damage occurring from the use of aspirin to treat chicken pox. I didn't understand any of this, of course, at the time. I only knew she was gone and so were her pictures and that every time I said her name, my mom would cry and my older brother would get very angry with me. So, I quickly learned and followed along. I was afraid to ever have a friend named Patti, not wanting to speak her name but kept my angel sister close to my heart and would talk to her at night. As I grew, sometimes I would secretly whisper to my mom asking about her when no one was around. She always cried and I always felt so badly about that, but my desire to know compelled me to choose hurting my mother rather than go on pretending. It became our secret and she would tell me small, beautiful details about her. Like how much my older sister loved me and had fun playing with me. And the time she dreamed about her... she had her blonde hair all in curls just like my mom always liked to fix it, and she walked in the back door, came directly over to my mom and without a word, gently kissed her cheek. She believed this was Patti's way of saying good-bye. We rarely spoke of her, but when we did it was so healing and just felt so right inside even though I was convinced what I was doing was so wrong. To avoid the pain I believed I was inflicting on my mother, I would sneak around and ask neighbors what happened, rummage through her bottom dresser drawer and find pictures of her and sweet little notes and drawings she had made that my mom had tucked away. I just needed to know as much as I could.

Eight years ago I lost my baby, Katie, at 11 weeks. I was devastated and surprised at just how deep my pain and sense of loss was. I felt compelled to do something with my experience and tried to help others who were grieving in the same way. But it wasn't until I attended a class called Children & Grief that I had a personal epiphany, a revelation connecting so many dots in my life. I learned that if you're old enough to love, you're old enough to grieve. It was explained that, at the age of four, children process through repetition – which was why I kept asking over and over again about my sister. And as children develop and death can be more clearly understood, they need honest explanations so their minds don't just fill in the blanks, which can be scarier than the reality. And at each stage of development, children need to be allowed to grieve all over again. Denying grief and loss only postpones, never eliminates. The only way to move through it is to acknowledge, talk, cry, and FEEL every emotion that comes along on the grief journey. Having a support system, opportunities to share and express grief, a stable environment, information about death, and encouragement to just be a “kid” will allow children to mourn in a healthy way.

My parents were wonderful, loving people and I don't blame them in any way. They did the best they knew to do and times were different then in the way people dealt with death. But as a child of loss in an environment that did not allow for healthy grieving, without even realizing it, I had been prepared for being a parent experiencing loss. Somehow I instinctively knew that I NEEDED to acknowledge my baby, talk about her, keep her part of our family, express my love for her, and openly grieve her loss. I am so thankful for my sister Patti and the lessons her young life taught me that will last me and allow me to serve others for the rest of my life.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS!

In memory of...

Jana Sierra Alford

Our beloved daughter. Born silent September 15, 2002. A silent moment in our arms, forever in our hearts.

By: Christa Alford

Mary Margaret Alexander

By: Wayne Alexander

Owen Michael Backer

By: Erica Murphy

Baby Baird

By: Cameron Baird

Aidan and Jack Baratta

By: Kelley and Mike Baratta

Makenna Marie Barron

By: Martin Barron

Bjorn

By: Petronella Gurule

Sarah Blanchard

In memory of Sarah Blanchard with love and prayers

By: Linda and Ron Blanchard

Corynn Hannah Boresi

By: Rhonda Kurz

The Three Childers Angels

By: Colleen Childers

Jess C. Cooper IV

Forever remembered and always loved. Missed by his Mom, Shawn, and twin brothers, Jordan and Cody.

By: Shawn Dennis

Emma Elizabeth Cloherly

By: Kevin and Maureen Moran

Ellen Elizabeth Dennigmann

Thinking of you baby girl, Love Nana

Alivia M. Deschaine

By: Mary Koch

Connor Arellano Douglas

By: Julia and Adam Weyhaupt

Finnegan Douglas

By: Sarah and Chuck Mattingly
By: Mr. and Mrs. John Inkley

Eliza Taylor Duckworth

By: Dean and Peggy Baker

Kathryn Ann Ewald

By: Missy Ewald

Stephen James Farrow

By: Kathryn Farrow

Ellie Warren Field

By: Melanie Field

Lynsie Fishman

By: Cynthia Layton

Rita Rose Gaertner

By: Jennifer O'Keefe

Jack Andrew Granger II

In memory of our son, stillborn at 32 weeks, July 4th, 2004.

By: Jack Granger

James Michael Gray

By: Lucy and Mike Gray

Patrick James Green

By: Virginia Green

Andrew Daniel Hampes

By: William and Anita Hampes

Mason Lee Harris

By: Lee and Denise Harris

Ridge Chappel Hneleski

By: Carcy Hneleski



Nathalia Jimenez

By: Dailyn Silva

Jeremy Johnson

By: Carol Johnson

Salmon Juenke

We love you and miss you. You have a little sister now-her name is Alcie.

By: Emily Katz

Angelena Rose Kosior

By: Megan Zendarski

The Kiefer Babies

By: Mike and Vicki Kiefer

Ben Kroll

By: Amanda Portes

Lainee and Fiona

By: With love Lembuth, Shea, Robinson Families

Lauren and Emma Lambert

By: Karen and Ron Wilkinson
By: Jan Conlin and Eugene Goetz
By: Tom and Shelly Sinas
By: Michael and Mishi Hartman
By: Claudia Nixon
By: Ally Beekman
By: Andrea Kiehl
By: John and Elizabeth Scott
By: Cheryl Tischleder
By: Steven George
By: Kristin Heebner
By: Ann Mitchell
By: JoAnn O'Leary
By: Barbara Hoveland
By: Debbie and Marc Hasko
By: Susan Smith
By: Tony Engebretsen
By: John Geelan

By: Ronald and Kimberly Price
By: Eleda Francis Hubbard
By: Erik Romslo
By: David Swenson
By: David Zucco
By: Todd Wilkinson
By: Shira Shapiro
By: Julia Dayton Klein
By: S. Kolar
By: Carrie and Lou Lambert
By: Melba Smith
By: Mark and Amy Pihlstrom

Charles W. Lammert
By: Gregory Lammert

Nina and Teresa Bowman Lim
By: Joy and Chito Lim

Lindsey Nicole Mahone
By: Lorry and Maurice Mahone

Caroline Grace and Christina Rose Maner
By: Kimberly Maner

Charlotte Mary McBurney
Love her friends and cousins on earth! We love you!!!
By: Katy McBurney

Baby Mckenna
We will always remember you, much love.
By: Angela Bell

Amber Rae McMillian
By: Robert and Helen Weiss

Mary Fran McVey
By: Mrs. Fran McVey

Hope Elizabeth Moriarty
By: Kathryn Scruggs

Christian and Michael Mutchler
By: Anton and Rachel Jaar

Nathalia
Our little granddaughter who was born on July 23, 2010.
By: Victor Silva

Leah Ceylon Necole Neal
By: NYPL Staff Services

Addyson Lynn Peach
By: Jim and Jill Peach

Joshua Mirkay Redington
By: Melissa and Chris Redington

Liliana Reinhart
"Sweet little flower of Heavenly birth, you were too fair to bloom on earth"
By: Jennifer and Carri

Evelyn Louise Rohde
By: Andy and Teresa Rohde

Brendan Terrence Rooney
By: Jodi Rooney

Steffen Roth
Our little newborn grandson
By: Ray and Diana Cheshire

Charley Rowekamp
By: Kathryn Alexander



Philip Sauder
By: Clair and Nancy Sauder

William Joseph Schamel
By: Laura Richter and Paul Schamel

Hailey Seabrooks
By: Nicole Seabrooks

Cohen Michael Stremmel
By: Bob, Joyce and Kristyn Harland

Kennedy Morris Stuckey
By: Charles Morris

Sophia Nance Vein
By: Carcy Hneleski

Tess Welker
By: Brian Welker

Angel Serra Wingate
By: Mandy Wingate

In Honor of...

Trina Volz
By: David and Debra Volz

In honor of Carrie Lambert's involvement in Share and in honor of Carrie making partner in her firm!
By: Jennifer Hand

Friends of Share...

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Gavin

Linda Leindecker

Saint John United Church of Christ

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Margherio

Allan and Patricia Derhalke

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Krug

Barb Clark

Our three girls-two in our arms and all in our hearts.
By: Greta Frazier

OC Walk to Remember

Dr. Charles Corr

Jonathan's fund
By: Rachel Whitmire

My Forever Child

Corine Hollingsworth

Metro Detroit Share Group

Walk To Remember- Wakefield, MA

WITH GRATITUDE

Share thanks those who have so graciously given these monetary donations in memory of a baby, relative, friend, and in honor of all loved ones and through Matching Gift Programs. Gratuitous donations are also accepted from anyone who wants to help Share in its mission. We gratefully acknowledge these gifts, which help us continue to reach out and fulfill the daily needs of bereaved parents. Share's services are available free of charge to bereaved parents, family and friends, or anyone whose life has been touched by the loss of baby.

When you make a donation in memory of a/your baby(ies), please include the name(s) of the baby(ies), the birth/death date(s) and the parents name(s). If you donate in memory/honor of a special loved one, please include their name(s) and pertinent information. A short message may also be included with any donation.

Please remember to include your return address and the addresses of those you wish to receive an acknowledgment. Unless previously authorized to do so, Share will not release any personal information, (address, phone number, e-mail, etc.) except to print donors names in this newsletter. If you wish your name to remain anonymous, please indicate this when submitting your donations.

THE MISSION

Share's mission is to serve those who are touched by the tragic death of a baby through early pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life.

Six times a year, we share information and ideas from parents and professionals to support and provide a sense of friendship for bereaved parents. We hope you will find this newsletter helpful and that you will share it with others you feel it would interest.

We encourage you to send your personal articles, stories, poems, artwork and recipes to our newsletters at any time. Please do not submit copied, copyrighted, or web articles. The Newsletter Editor reserves the right to edit your personal submission for content and/or length to fit the needs of the particular newsletter edition in which it will appear. Your submission may be used for the current newsletter, or may be used in a future publication. All submissions become the property of Share.

Please include all pertinent personal information so we may identify you and your baby/ies in the respective publication. Your submission grants Share permission to list your personal information with the publication unless instructed otherwise.

Newsletter Submission Guidelines:

1. Please provide title, authors' name and applicable loss information for article submissions. If donating monetarily in memory of a baby, please provide loss information, including the parent's name(s).
2. Submissions must be received no later than the 1st of the month, one month prior to issue month. If you are making a donation and would like to be recognized, or honor a birthday or anniversary, in the most recent edition of the newsletter, then it, must be received by the 10th of the month, two months prior to the publication.
3. Please type your submissions in single spaced, 10 point, Times New Roman or Arial font when possible.
4. Submissions can be mailed to 402 Jackson, St. Charles, MO 63301, e-mailed to mnichols@nationalshare.org or faxed to 636-947-7486.

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Carmel, NY 10512

TWO SETS OF TWINS

Written by Jeanna O'Leary



My husband and I experienced the deaths of our first-born twins, David and Allison, in the winter of 2000. Just 4 months later we received the news that not only were we pregnant, but I was carrying twins AGAIN! This subsequent pregnancy was not only physically difficult (16 weeks on strict bed rest), but it was also emotionally difficult. We faced all those dreaded “firsts” that weigh so heavily in a bereaved parent's heart. Even though we tried to be hopeful and excited for our unborn sons, we deeply grieved for David and Allison on all the holidays and special events we had to face following their deaths. Thankfully in December 2001, our beautiful twin sons, Aidan and Grant, were born. At six weeks premature, both were healthy and strong and are now nine years old.

In the months following our sons' births, I remember questioning and finding myself overwhelmed with not only the challenges and demands of caring for two newborns, but how and when would we tell them about their older brother and sister? Would they ever feel a connection to them as part of our family? From the very beginning, David's and Allison's pictures have been displayed in two picture frames in our home. We have always used their names when we discuss things like their birthdays or special programs we attend through Share like the Walk for Remembrance and Hope, Angel Ball or the December 6th Angel of Hope services. It was our hope that by talking about David and Allison and planning some our family time around Share events, our boys would eventually become aware of their older siblings and feel comfortable asking questions.

It's been interesting over the past nine years how both of our sons have developed their awareness of David and Allison as members of our family. Their first real questions started around ages four or five when they looked at the pictures. They began to see physical differences in their own baby pictures compared to David's and Allison's. I remember they would ask why David and Allison were so tiny; why was their skin so dark (David was born at almost 21 weeks; Allison at 23 weeks). They would ask to see the clothes and blankets and I realized they were beginning to make the connection that David and Allison were very real babies that their mom and dad held, just like them. When our boys entered kindergarten they each had to create a family tree. I remember Aidan asked if it was okay to include his older brother and sister. Grant did not ask or want to include David and Allison on his family tree and that was perfectly fine with us. It was our belief that each of our boys should always have the choice to include their siblings when they felt comfortable. On the other hand, both of them went through a phase where they told EVERYONE they could about David and Allison. The store cashier, hairdresser, exterminator, and the poor appliance repairman! I will never forget that “deer in the headlights” look on his face as Grant so casually explained why his big brother and sister did not live in our house. For a while it seemed they were more interested in the various reactions and attention they received when they talked about their brother and sister.

My sons are now in 3rd grade and their awareness and questions have again changed. The questions about specific details and physical traits have turned into questions like “Do you still miss them?” “Did you cry when they died?” “Do you still get sad?” Many of their friends have older siblings and our sons have recently expressed how they wish David was here so he could teach

them things about sports and music like other big brothers do. Or how they wish Allison was here so they could taunt and tease her as do their fellow nine year-old friends with their sisters.

Weeks may pass before either Aidan or Grant might mention David or Allison's names. But does that mean they no longer feel love or a connection to them? Absolutely not! A perfect example of this just happened yesterday. Grant came home from school and I could tell he wanted to share something with me, but was hesitant. After he put away his backpack, he brought me a little piece of paper. He said during his computer class the teacher asked them to create a basic shape and print it on paper. With Valentine's Day this past weekend, Grant created a heart-shaped design and decided to write a valentine message to his brother and sister. The message said, “Dear David and Allison, I really wish I could see you. If you were here, I would say Happy Valentine's Day. If you were alive it would be great. Love your brother Grant.”

What a message this was! Knowing Grant remembered his brother and sister on the day of all days to express your love or care for someone meant more than I could say. It's hard at times to believe 10 years have gone by since we last saw David and Allison's faces and held their tiny hands. Keeping their memory alive in our family is very important to my husband and me. We have cherished how our subsequent children have come to recognize and open their hearts to their older brother and sister. In 2007, we welcomed our fifth child, Shane, into the family. He is now three and I am waiting for the same questions to start all over. My wish is that as all three of my sons grow and mature, their hearts will forever hold a loving bond with each other and with their big brother and sister.

RESPECTING CHILDREN'S INSTINCTS & AWARENESS

Written by Joann O'Leary

When families experience a perinatal loss older siblings suffer two losses: the baby they were expecting and the parents they knew before the loss. They live with parents whose behaviors are altered by intense grief, often at an age when they are too young to understand what's happening. It is common for parents to think their other children are too young to understand. Also, they do not want their children to feel the same grief the parents do. Even very young children are tuned in to the emotions of the significant adults in their lives. A child's grieve and resiliency in coping, however, can be trusted and shared to the benefit of the entire family. Many children seem to have a spiritual connection and wisdom we adults often overlook. While I interviewed bereaved parents raising children I have been struck by stories of children who seem to possess this knowledge and I share two stories.

Grace was three when her mother's pregnancy ended in an early miscarriage. She had known about the pregnancy, said right away it was a boy and called him Baby Cabbage. She said good morning to him every day and continues to refer to him as her brother in heaven. When her mother became pregnant again, they decided not to tell Grace until after the twenty week ultrasound. They felt Grace grieved so painfully and deeply for Baby Cabbage that they wanted to spare her another trauma. It was painful for the parents to watch and they feared another loss for them all. The day they were preparing to go in for their ultrasound Grace walked up to her mother and said, "There's another baby in your tummy. I'm going to have a baby sister!" Her



mother shared they were going to the doctor that day and maybe we'll find out it's a boy. When she came home she told Grace it was a girl and that she could now tell her friends at school. Grace replied, "Well I already told them. I knew I was having a sister." So in spite of her parents thinking Grace was unaware they were pregnant she had already made a connection with her new sibling's presence in the family. Four months later her little sister was born!

Keeping the memory alive of a deceased child in the family is important not only for the children alive at the time but for the children who follow. The Smith family was very open about the death of their son Kevin to his siblings who were 18 months and three years old when he died. Although they did not bring the children to the hospital to see Kevin (something they now regret) his death was an open topic in the family. The parents allowed them to see their deceased brother's baby things: a little hat, his footprints, and some of his hair. The family also had pictures of him in the upstairs hallway and ornaments for the Christmas tree with his name and birth date. Along with these things, the siblings became memory keepers for Kevin as an important member of their family. This helped the baby who followed, Tony, to become a separate individual. They told Tony about his older brother, held Kevin's picture in front of his face

before he was old enough to sit up. Understanding at a young age that not all babies live, these siblings at age three and five had a deeper relationship with their new baby brother. Their mother explains, "Tony's life was so real to them. They knew what it meant to not have a brother living. They were truly thankful for Tony."

Protecting young children from the pain of loss is an understandable desire. Yet these stories illustrate the wisdom children have that we often overlook. Parents who are able to communicate their thoughts and emotions teach their children that they can trust their parents to be honest and that they will be cared for no matter what happens in the family. It is a valuable gift that builds strong families.

"THE MORE WE
SHELTER CHILDREN
FROM EVERY
DISAPPOINTMENT,
THE MORE
DEVASTATING FUTURE
DISAPPOINTMENTS
WILL BE."

Fred G. Gosman

ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS

Written by Deb Welsch

Clayton came into our family on March 24, 2003. Actually, he came to us nine months earlier. Those were some of the most exciting months for our family of five--realizing we would soon become a family of six. The news that we were expecting our fourth child came as a shock to my husband and I. You see, our three oldest were 9, 13, and 15 years old at the time. We had settled into our family life as it was, and this was certainly going to stir things up.

My pregnancy became our family's pregnancy. We all shared in the preparations for Clayton, even joked that he would have five parents. He certainly was never going to want for love. His birth day arrived, and we all made our way to the hospital to witness our miracle. Little did we know that by the end of the day our miracle would turn into our greatest grief. Clayton was born still.

Now our family that prepared for his arrival together would have to learn to help each other through our grief. Of course, as parents, my husband and I thought it was our job to help our children travel down this road. However, we were not prepared for how much healing they would bring us.

Our third child, Josh, had wisdom beyond his years. His ability to express his love for his brother filled my heart with love. Shortly after Clayton's funeral, we were together as a family supporting each other. During a silence in the conversation, Josh spoke up with this comment: "I will miss him so much because I was really looking forward to raising him." Upon hearing his comment, my heart dropped. Even though it brought tears to my eyes, I also felt very proud of the compassionate boy he had become and knew then that he would always honor the memory of his brother.

Lauren, our second child, knew way more than any 13 year old girl should know about pregnancy. She had read all the books and couldn't wait to dress her new brother in all the outfits we had

shopped for. Lauren is also our ultimate optimist, and I can only imagine the shock it was to her system to hear we had lost Clayton. How would she recover? When asked to write a letter to Clayton, Lauren thanked him for teaching her so much about life and making her more sympathetic to others. She also thanked him for the time we had with him and said that she would one day see him again and would then get to know him better. Always trying to see the bright side, our ultimate optimist. Lauren will always treasure Clayton's memory.

Our first born, Aaron, is our sentimental child, one who is very quiet with his feelings. In the early days after Clayton's death, Aaron wore his emotions on his sleeve. Although it was very hard to see my child suffering, it was good to hear him talk about his feelings. As time went on he became less open, and I wondered how we would know if he was remembering his brother? About six years after Clayton's passing, Aaron was in his third year of college and would miss Clayton's birthday for the first time. Although I knew this day would eventually come, it was hard to not have all of our children home for the day. That night, we got an email from Aaron. He had commemorated Clayton's birthday his own special way by wearing a shirt he had worn the day Clayton was born. Although it was quite small for him by then, he had saved that special shirt. It was his way of honoring his brother. Yes, he would always carry Clayton's memory in his heart.

In less than 2 months, we will commemorate Clayton's eighth birthday. I always plan a little ceremony we hold at his graveside. We won't all be together this year, but I know we will all be remembering the love and excitement we carried with us preparing for Clayton's arrival. I know we will all be holding onto the love and strength we carry with us because of our special angel.

Children are God's ultimate gift. We thank him for our four.

DISCUSSION BOARD

What have the bereaved children in your life said or done that have made you pause and maybe reconsider your perspective on the loss of your baby?

My son who was 3 years old at the time of our loss says he has a sister in heaven (we didn't get to find out what our sweet lil angel was) and talks about Baby Pechman all the time, my younger child talks about having a sister as well. Both of my boys say that they see their sister and talk to her all the time. It gives me chills. What little ones can see and we can't?!?!
Le Ann Pechman

My first baby boy passed away in 2004 and we had our second child in 2006. We have always taken him to the cemetery with us. He is 4 now, but when we was younger (around 2) he used to always tell us he could see Jesus under the oak tree with babies gathered around him. [It] gives me chill bumps to this day. He tells me all the time he remembers seeing Him there.
Kera Ables

My son is 9 and his deceased brother (who would be 13) has been a part of his life since day one. He understands the loss & pain that I had before he came into our life - when he signs a card for me he will make a heart & put a B in the middle of the heart to include Benjamin - because he does live in our hearts. I myself often wonder if I would be so overprotective and what kind of a mom I would be if I wasn't a bereaved mom.
Robin Spencer-Klimaszewski

My 3 year old son Calvin says to everyone that his sister Zara lives in Holy God's house. :) Zara died 13 months before Calvin was born.
Emer Hennessy

My daughter was 3. When my son went to Heaven, she was 23 months. The second night after he passed, she waved in the air and told me to wave because her brother was there. She would wake up some mornings and tell me she had dreams with him. One day she was taking a bath and I asked if she had a dream with her brother the night before and she said, "Yes, but I can't go where he is at. He's very far." That took me back a little because I have never spoken to her about Heaven. Another time, we went to the cemetery. [As] we were leaving she told me to stop the car because her brother was waving bye and he wanted to give her hug. ♥
Johanna Leonzo

My son is 9 now (but was 7 when we lost his brother Caleb). We have a spot in our back yard with a little bench and a baby in Jesus hand. Our neighbor boy was going to sit on it and I heard my son tell him "No that's my brother's bench." I was so proud of him and I realized at that moment he will never forget his little brother and always stand up for him. Caleb had Down Syndrome and I feel like he will always have a place in his heart for children with disabilities. My daughter, who is 5, always calls Caleb "Jesus" and wants to sing "Jesus Loves Me."
Elizabeth Chester Mayfield

My daughter is 3 and I lost my son 4 years ago. We have been talking a bit about her brother in Heaven. We have a pencil sketch of him hanging on the wall. One evening my niece was over and talking about her new baby brother, my daughter was half asleep on her and sat up and yelled, "I have a brother too, see. He is over there on the wall." I felt so sad that it is the only connection to her sibling that she will ever have.
Jody Perkins-Vourgarakis

Preparation for this day had been intense with firsts. We packed her backpack for the first time. We packed the brand new lunchbox for the first time. And, we walked down the four short steps readying to walk our middle child to her first day of Kindergarten. We were supposed to have done this two years ago. That opportunity was lost with an exponential list of other 'should have dones' when Emma died. It made this day even more special.

"Wait," she yelled. As soon as I turned I saw it too, a flash of color from Emma's bush. No, it is too soon. The leaves can't be red, not yet. They weren't - but one was. I stood before this early leaf, unable to comprehend, unsure what to think. And so, I said the words out loud, to make it real, to be sure the others could see it too. "Just one red leaf on Emma's bush?" And although my statement had entirely rhetorical intentions, Claire answered the question with the truest, most honest voice I've ever heard. "Yeah - Emma came to wish me good luck." *Of course she did, of course.*
Cara Tyrell

Sometimes, children have the best lessons, the one's with perspective. My oldest son, Mitchell, who turned five the day before our sweet angel was born, understands it best. After returning home from the hospital, we were sitting around the table eating dinner, as we have done routinely hundreds of times. Only this night, my husband and I were consumed by grief, emotions raw and feeling numb. Mitchell started talking about Kayla being home. He named her Kayla after one of his favorite friends who babysat him, so I assumed he was talking about her. I said, "Honey, I'm not talking about big Kayla, I'm talking about your baby sister, Kayla." And he responded matter-of-factly, "I know Mom. Baby Kayla is at home in heaven with Jesus."
Lauri Flegel

BROTHERHOOD

Written by Shaun Lammert

In the chill of a November afternoon, the birth of my little brother was announced. As the oldest of three children and the only son in the family, I had wanted that day to come for quite some time. I deeply longed for that brotherhood bond and the thought of someday having this naïve boy look at me in admiration. Expectations saturated my mind with how complete my life would be as I served as an inspiring role model for him. Naturally, I was ecstatic when I heard about the delivery. I could now partake in that special brother to brother relationship I never before had. However, as I anticipated a wonderful future with him, he suddenly died just four days after being given his life. Although I did not recognize it at the time, his death would challenge me both to grow as a person and to appreciate the valuable relationships I share with my family and friends.

My mother had been pregnant for seven months and unexpectedly went into labor. The baby was born prematurely and, at my request, was given the name Christopher Michael. With the excitement and surprise of my baby brother being born, I overlooked the fact that he was struggling with some medical problems. And when I did ask about his condition, I was repeatedly told that I would not understand what was wrong with him and that I should not worry. Christopher's struggle was familiar to me because both Heather and Megan, my younger sisters, had also experienced medical complications after they were born. Knowing they overcame their early struggle with life gave me the hope that Christopher would soon leave the hospital and come home. Although his condition worsened, I did not want to give up on my chance for having a brother. I continued to tell myself that he would soon regain his strength. Unfortunately, my hopes did not save him.

A phone call shattered the early morning's stillness on December 4, 1982. When I awoke from the commotion, I immediately felt my heart sink for I could sense the disappointment awaiting me. My grandparents tried to calm me down and send me back to bed, but the anguish overtaking my soul kept me up. In a state of bewilderment, I fell out of touch with my feelings. An indescribable numbness suddenly surrounded me. My dream of having a little brother was crushed, and his death was unjustified and unexplainable. There was to be no naïve little boy looking up to his big brother as a coach in sports, a mentor in school, or a guide in life. All of my plans and intentions were stolen from me, and I was left feeling very abandoned and very deluded. In those brief four days, I was never allowed to see my brother; I had nothing to remember him by.

Being seven at the time, I became a very distraught child. In less than one week, I had been blessed with the brother I had always wanted and then had Christopher stripped away from me with no reservation. I felt so betrayed and somehow so responsible that I gradually became intertwined in an endless web of confusion. Needing an answer to explain the

unfathomable, many questions developed. Dissatisfied with the inadequacy of reasoning, I ended up frustrating myself more. My mother was still sick in the hospital. Friends and family tried to reach out to us by suggesting that they knew what we were going through. Although their intentions were charitable, I loathed each attempt to sugar-coat reality and make my problems disappear. As I rejected all intercessions to help, I became overwhelmed with spite and insecurity, for I no longer knew the world I was in. My childhood had been paralyzed. My zest for life had been swindled from me, and I had done nothing wrong.

Christopher's funeral was held and I was finally reunited with my mother and father. Being clutched in their embrace, I was touched with their deep regret for feeling that they had somehow failed me. As tears rolled off my mother's cheek onto mine, she kept repeating how sorry she was for not bringing Christopher home to me. Here, my mom and dad were hurting too, and yet they blamed themselves for the disappointment that my sisters and I felt. Reassuring the two of them that it was not their fault, I gathered Heather and Megan so we could hold each other as a family. At that moment, I knew I was not alone. I had a family to share this with – we had all felt a terrible loss.

Glaring at his casket in the corner, I was embittered with resentment. This hopeless seven year old hated that his family had been served this much disgrace and pain. Doubt filled my soul. My faith escaped me. *Where was the loving, gracious God I had been taught to believe in?* I blamed Him and questioned His motives. The thoughts of what might have been were too important to neglect, too real to overlook. I wanted to know why I felt so persecuted and when I was going to move on in life.

After twenty-eight years of pondering Christopher's death, I understand more of how to answer the questions asked by that distraught seven year old boy. Time has provided some of that healing. More significantly, the void of losing my brother has been filled with a couple of missing pieces to the puzzle. The first miracle to my healing process has been my sister, Shannon. With her being brought into the world two years after Christopher's death, I have been blessed with the responsibility of being her Godfather. She has allowed me to be that big brother once again and has always made me feel like I have been an inspiration to her. Shannon taught me to cherish the family I do have and has opened my eyes to how much love my family has for each other. The second miracle has been my fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. As a freshman in college, I was drawn to join Sig Ep or, maybe better stated, Sig Ep found me. Sigma Phi Epsilon instilled virtue, diligence, and brotherly love into my daily life. I was given the chance one hundred times over to identify with the

continued on page 17...

MOLLY & EMILY

Written by Missy Gurik

Our baby isn't going to live with us.

Those were the words that I used to explain to our daughter that her five day old sister was not going to survive.

"Emily's heart is very sick, and the doctors can't fix it, even though we want them to," I continued.

Silence was her only response.

"Do you understand what I am telling you?" I asked.

Her tiny body slumped down in my arms, her tiny spirit was defeated beyond what any words could describe. No further dialogue was needed, Molly understood exactly what I was telling her.

Emily was our second daughter. She was born on August 25, 2003, after many long months of waiting. To say that we were excited about her arrival would do no justice to the actual feelings that we had, but it was our four year old daughter who was looking forward to sharing a life with her sister, more than anything. On the day that Emily was born, Molly was running around the hospital wearing a pink shirt that read, "I'm the big sister." Emily's birth had given us all a scare, but she appeared to be healthy, and Molly was unaffected by the drama...all that SHE cared about was that her baby sister was here...to play with her. About an hour after Emily's birth, she began to show signs of distress, which we would later find out was a severe congenital heart defect that would end her life in only a few days. Still, nothing dampened Molly's spirits that day...her baby was here!

Almost immediately, our Emily was shipped to a children's hospital a few hours away. Molly could not go and be with her sister, and as I look back now, I can see that this was the beginning of her pain. For five days, baby Emily lived on life support, waiting for surgery, or waiting for the miracle of a new heart. A miracle which would never come. For

those same five days, Molly sat in the waiting room of the hospital, anticipating that the doctors would come out and tell her that she could take her baby home. Another miracle which would never come.

Molly held her baby sister while we made plaster casts of her hands and feet. Molly gently wiped Emily's hands with a warm wash cloth after we were finished, and giggled as she commented that Emily was dirty because she was "playing in the mud." Molly hugged her baby, and gently kissed her cheek. Then she turned to me and said "And see mommy, I'm even holding her head like you told me to!"

When we lose our children, we admittedly become new people, but our surviving children also undergo drastic changes, and are also never the same as they were before their loss. There are more hopes and fears, and a lifetime of questioning the death of their sibling. They are constantly processing this loss in new ways. Some people talk about the irrational fears of children following a loss, but when your sibling dies, no fears are irrational anymore. The unimaginable has happened, and their worst nightmare has become a reality. Molly taught me this lesson almost immediately.

From the very beginning, Molly's fears were very different than my own, but it showed how deeply she was processing her loss. Molly was with us for the calling hours, funeral, and burial. We explained to her what was going to happen, and then took her to Emily's grave a few hours after the burial, so she could have "closure" on the event. That was the beginning of the "new Molly."

Years have passed since that day... the day that all of our lives changed forever. I have watched Molly grow and change into a person that has incredible strength, by anyone's standards, but she certainly exceeds any expectations I may have had. I ache for Molly in her

quiet moments as she bows her head and says, "I miss my baby sister." I watch Molly as she runs through the park with excitement, and I am relieved that she is seemingly unaware of the pain that we have all endured... but inevitably, that evening she will always remind me that Emily should have been at the park with us that day. Molly keeps a memory box in her bedroom, filled with pictures of herself and Emily, as well as angel tokens that she has gathered since Emily's passing. Usually it will sit undisturbed on her dresser, but occasionally I find it hidden underneath her bed when company is coming over... "just to keep it safe" she reminds me. I no longer touch it or move it from where it lays. That is Molly's sacred treasure, and it stays only where she wants it to.



© Christine Schneider/Corbis

*In memory of Emily Hope Gurik
August 25th, 2003- August 30th, 2003
- Died of Hypoplastic left heart
syndrome, undiagnosed during
pregnancy.*

FACING A LONELY PASSOVER

Written by Ilene Springer

Matzah, the Seder, ancient Egypt. These are some of the things that come to mind when we think of Passover. But probably the most poignant thought is that of family and friends. For better or worse, what would Passover be without sharing it with the most important people in your lives?

And yet, every year, some people -- and most of us eventually -- have to face the first Passover without someone significant, whether it be a husband, wife, mother, father, or wonderful friend. And for those people, it means that this Passover will be different -- and difficult. This is especially true for older adults who, according to geriatric researchers, often face accumulated losses. But there are some things you can do for yourself (or others) to get through a lonely Passover.

Acknowledge the loss

Don't expect things to be the same this Passover if you've lost someone close to you. Allow yourself to remember how it was before, and give yourself time to grieve. Don't try to pretend everything is

okay for the benefit of others. If possible, do something in the person's memory, such as lighting extra candles. Change the tradition a little. Some people say it's helpful to sit in the person's place at dinner, so you don't dwell on the empty spot. Or if you've always held the Seder at your home, go to someone else's house this year. Do anything to make it easier. And most important, remind yourself that the holiday or your present circumstances will not always be like this: pain does lessen over time. Find others who share your grief, and support each other.

Make some plans

If you don't have a seder to go to at someone's home, check out the many seders (sedarim) held at various temples and Jewish community centers. It may even help you to volunteer at one. Or invite someone over to your home for an informal seder; the company and a little tradition is what's important, not a big, elaborate meal.

Give yourself some extra TLC

At a time when you're feeling especially

sad, it's important to take extra good care of your physical and emotional health. Keep up your exercise; long walks are the easiest and best. Eat properly and avoid self-medicating yourself with alcohol or other drugs. And by all means, get enough rest. Grief is a very physically taxing process, and you need time to renew your strength. In other words, be good to yourself.

Ask for help

It's normal after a loss to experience sadness around a holiday like Passover and on other memorable occasions as well. But if the sadness persists and deepens, affecting your functioning, you may be suffering from clinical depression which requires medical intervention. If you're feeling sad and hopeless for two weeks straight, if you're having trouble eating and sleeping (too little or too much), call your doctor.

On Passover, we open the door for Elijah. This Passover, when you open the door, also let other people into your life who can help you during this tough time.

MEMO

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MARCH 4-6, 2011

NOVEMBER 4-6, 2011

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Some Say

By Justin Margadonna

Some say you're gone,
That I'll never see you or hear you or touch you...

Every time I eat an ice cream cone, you'll taste the cold chocolate
and brittle jimmies.

Every time I watch the Red Sox, you'll be sitting on my knee
hearing the Fenway roar and the crack of the bat.

Every time I smell fresh fire from a chimney on a winter's night,
you'll be huddled next to me in a warm blanket.

Every time I listen to the Crows, we'll sing together among the
stars, palm trees, and rolling green hills.

Every time a great book finds its way into my hands, I'll tell you
what a wonderful story it is.

Every time I pat Sugar and smell her golden fur, she'll know we're
both there.

Every time my toes touch the sand and the smell of salt surrounds,
we'll be holding hands.

Every time I see the castle buried in fireworks, both of us will be
five-years old having the time of our lives.

Every time Mommy and I walk down a peaceful path, you'll be in
between swinging from our arms.

Some say...I say.

A Child's Goodbye

By Colleen Berry

Hooray! A brother or sister for me.
A new baby to add to the family.

A brother to play ball, a sister and her doll.

We will be a happy family.

One day, Mom and Dad have tears,
I watch them with fear.

They give me a hug and kiss,
Our baby-to-be they miss.

My brother or sister one day
An angel now has flown away.

Our angel we love,
Was called by God up above.

With Mom and Dad, I too am sad,
This is something so bad.

Not an angel did we seek
But a person for us to meet.

One day when God calls me
My angel sibling I will see.

For now I know she is happy to be
A member of God's Angel family!

powerful bond of brotherhood and that can never be taken away from me. Within the walls of the fraternity, I shared dynamic life experiences and developed life-long friendships. Through grieving I have come to understand that all painful events in life have a meaningful purpose – sometimes it just takes time to figure out what that purpose is.

Christopher's grave is marked with the scripture, "I will not

forget you..." And I have not. With every course my life has taken, I have asked him to be with me in thought and prayer. His guidance and support have allowed me to learn and grow to be a better person – how ironic that my plans of him always being able to look to me for direction have been reversed. I chuckle at that now. He has been my inspiration and maybe that is the simple answer to all of my questions.

If you read the previous article that Shaun wrote, you should have more than enough information to understand what happened to my little brother, but to summarize; our mom got sick, went into premature labor, Christopher was born early, was sick too and lived just four days.

I was 2 1/2 at the time. My perspective is very much skewed by the fact that I have no personal memory of the events - only "knowing" what I have been told by my parents and older siblings. It should also be noted that outside of the Share community, no one has ever spoken to me of that time in our family's life - not one relative or family friend.

As a child, it seemed really simple. I had two brothers and two sisters, but one of the former just happened to not be living. When asked by someone, "How many kids are in your family?" I always responded, "Five." Often, the inquisitive person would say, "Wow that's a big family!" And my reply would be, "Well, my little brother died, so it's not that big." (If I could have photographs of all the people who froze at that moment.) I'd try to reassure them, "It's okay...it was a long time ago...he was just a baby,"...etc., etc. As a kid, I felt like I had to make these strangers feel better about my loss. Not only that, but they made me feel like including my little brother in my family was somehow wrong. In my innocence, I

didn't understand what was so paralyzing for them. I remember the first time I excluded Christopher from the "kid count." I was a pre-teen and wanted to be accepted and normal. It broke my heart not to include him, but no one else I knew had a dead brother. It was all of a sudden complicated.

From that moment, I was launched onto the roller coaster of grief – awakened by the passing of my youth. In between the moments of the daily life of a teenager, I would spend countless hours looking through Christopher's well-preserved baby book, full of sympathy cards, trying to discover who he was. I'd hide in the closet, crying bucketfuls just because I missed this little boy who I never got to meet. I even held a grudge at God for taking away an innocent soul. I wanted Christopher to have a birthday party, to go to school with me. I even wanted to fight with him. When I got older my grief was fueled by the passing of major life milestones. He was supposed to be in my wedding and to play with my kids at family get-togethers.

Shortly after my daughters third birthday, she noticed a framed picture in our living room - a copy of the sketch my parents had made of Christopher from his hospital Poloroids. The frame had been displayed in our home since before she was born.

RE-LEARNING ACCEPTANCE

Written by Megan Lammert Nichols

She asked, "Who is that baby, Mommy?"

"That's your Uncle Christopher," I said, wondering where the conversation may lead.

"Uncle Christopher? Where is he?"

"He's in our hearts. He died when he was a baby." I replied.

"Oh," she said looking up at me full of smiles, love and untainted acceptance.

And that was it. She never once questioned having an uncle that she had never "met."

It was at that moment that I realized what I had lost – not my brother, but my openness to his death. It dawned on me that although the anger and brokenness that I had felt for so long was necessary, it was also important to embrace the role Christopher had played in my life. His brief life was truly a gift. It taught me compassion and led me to help others who find themselves overwhelmed with grief. It showed me that life is to be treasured.

In the future, I'm sure my daughter will have more difficult questions, but for now I treasure that she is content in her own innocence and that I have found my way back to acceptance.

EVENTS ACROSS THE NATION

Caring for the Sorrow of Pregnancy & Infant Loss

A Conference for the Caregiver
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Allina Commons at Midtown Exchange
Minneapolis, Minnesota



This conference is designed for nurses, social workers, childbirth educators, postnatal educators, doulas, chaplains and other allied health professionals and students who honor, support and serve patients and families who experience pregnancy and infant loss.

Tuition is \$85.00

Visit www.nationalshare.org/training-conferences.html for more download a brochure.



TCF's 34th National Conference

Minneapolis/St. Paul
July 15-17, 2011
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

You will find it to be another great conference with around 100 workshops, sharing sessions, special keynote speakers at the Opening, Closing and Friday Afternoon and Saturday Evening banquets, Hospitality Room, Butterfly Boutique, Reflection Room, a completely stocked bookstore, special Friday evening entertainment and a Remembrance Candle Lighting. TCF's Walk to Remember will be held Sunday morning.

Reservations are now being accepted at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, Minneapolis South for those planning to attend the TCF's national conference July 15-17. Room rate is \$129 per night for a King Room or Double Bed Room, single or double occupancy; \$139 for triple and \$149 for quad. These special reduced rates are available on stays from July 10-19 if the reservation is placed by June 21 (subject to availability). These are specially negotiated rates available only for those attending the national conference.

In Your Eyes: Caregivers' Role In Bereavement Photography

April 22, 2011
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Chicago, IL

This well received full day, hands-on immersive workshop is for caregivers wanting to improve both the quality and content of the photographs they take as part of bereavement support for families experiencing Perinatal Loss. Presented by Todd Hochberg,

Visit www.toddhochberg.com/workshop.html for more information.

2011 National Gathering Monumental Journey of the Heart

July 29-31, 2011
Sheraton Reston Hotel,
Reston, Virginia / Washington, D.C.

Hotel Information:

Reston Sheraton

Call the hotel at (703) 620-9000 and tell them you are with the

Bereaved Parents of the USA or go

to www.starwoodmeeting.com/book/bereavedparents. Room rate is \$99 plus tax per night for a double or king size room for up to 4 people per room. The room rate is available from July 25th thru August 2nd. Reservations at this rate need to be made by June 26th, 2011. A free shuttle is available to/from Dulles International Airport. Free parking at the hotel is available to those driving to the Gathering.

Gathering Cost:

Registration for the gathering costs \$35 per person, with a maximum of \$90 per family. Early registrations receive a \$5.00 discount. Any registration postmarked or made online by May 31, 2011, costs just \$30 per person, with a maximum of \$80 per family. Meals will be \$145 for adults and \$75 for children for all seven meals, which includes 3 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners. An optional dinner buffet will be available on Thursday evening prior to the Documentary and Concert for \$17.

Registration forms and more information will be available soon. For more information, contact:

Jodi Norman
BP/USA NOVA Chapter
P.O. Box 7675, Woodbridge, VA 22195
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Check out our Perinatal Bereavement Resource Catalog! It's full of books, pamphlets and other wonderful resources suited for bereaved parents and their families as well as bereavement professionals. Start a Share group and receive a 20% discount on every order! Find our catalog online at <http://nationalshare.org/online-catalog.html> to download a printed copy of the catalog or to place an order online.

May/June 2011

MOTHER'S DAY & FATHER'S DAY

Deadline: April 15

Some parents find that honoring days like Mother's and Father's Day can be challenging. Please share ways you have found hope through these holidays. Have you received something unique, given something special, honored a new tradition, taken a vacation, or taken a break from these days? Share your story, poem, or creative expression for Mother's and Father's Day.

Jul/Aug 2011

PARENTING AFTER A LOSS

Submit your stories, poems, recipes, and artwork to: rcarlson@nationalshare.org

We encourage you to share your thoughts, feelings, ideas, poems, recipes, artwork and stories no matter what the designated topic. Your input is important to the creation of each newsletter.

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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a savanna at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, with a bright sun low on the horizon. In the foreground, several acacia trees are silhouetted against the bright sky. The trees have a characteristic flat-topped canopy and a thick, gnarled trunk. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

Please join us for
*Sunset over
the Savannah*

Ninth Annual Angel Ball
Saturday, April 16, 2011

Saint Charles Convention Center Saint Charles, Missouri
For reservations, please call 800-821-6819.