

Caring and Coping

2018 Walk to Remember Is a Wrap!

The 14th annual Atlanta Walk to Remember hosted almost 900 people on Sunday, October 14 for an afternoon of memorial activities for the whole family. Our theme was "We are Family" and we are grateful to our speakers for sharing their stories from the perspective of being a grandparent (Dale Israel), siblings (Alyssa and Fletcher Pontz) and a parent (Sandra Cramer).



“ I think we dream so we don't have to be apart for so long. If we are in each other's dreams, we can be together all the time.

— A.A. Milne ”

For Your Calendar

January 14, 2019
Caring & Coping Support Group

May 5, 2019
Northside Hospital H.E.A.R.T.strings Memorial Service

For memorial service information, call 404-851-8754

Hospital Tours

Special "Re-Entry" Tours Available by Appointment. *If you would prefer, H.E.A.R.T.strings would be honored to guide you, revisiting as much or as little of the hospital as you desire. Contact us to set up a time.*

You've Got Mail

Send us your email address! We communicate upcoming events and announcements. We will NOT share this information publicly. You may "opt out" at any time. Email us at northsidepnl@gmail.com to be added to the list.

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome your participation. Email us your submissions.



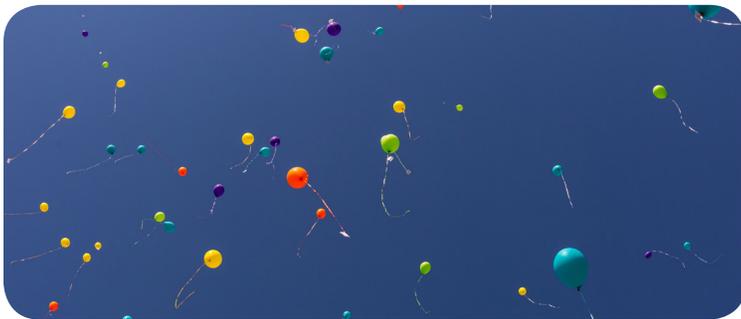
Contact Us

Atlanta: 404-851-8177
Cherokee: 770-224-1817
Forsyth: 770-292-2552
Email: northsidepnl@gmail.com
Website: northsidepnl.com
Address: 1000 Johnson Ferry Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30342

2018 Walk to Remember Is a Wrap!

Special keepsakes were created by Keri Mullinnex, and the candle was handmade by Lanie Taylor Pontz. If you follow *Atlanta Walk to Remember* on Facebook, you can view the live video we shared from the event. We are grateful to the Northside Hospital Atlanta Auxiliary for being our presenting sponsor, and for our other sponsoring organizations. Because of their support, and the support of individual donations from families, we are able to offer this important event to the community free of charge. We are also incredibly grateful to our volunteer committee for their creative talents and hard work over the last year as we prepared for the event. Thanks again to the wonderful Joy Cannis, who was capturing pictures for us. A link to the pictures is available on the Facebook page and our website. We are also grateful to Metro Music Therapy for their participation and for the beautiful voices and

music which added so much to the day. Attendance at the Walk has grown each year, and we hope this continues. Many families came from long distances to participate, and we even were asked by a mom in Hawaii if her sons' names could be read at our event. It is our honor to support this community, and we hope that all who attended, either in person or virtually, felt the love and support of those surrounding them.



2018 Atlanta Walk to Remember

Presented By



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“Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy.”

-Author Unknown



Planning for the Holidays When You Are Grieving

As you look ahead to the last months of the year, you may be filled with a sense of dread and fear. How do you prepare for the holidays when you are grieving? Will traditions help or not? How do you respond to social invitations? The general joy and festivity around you may leave you feeling alone and forgotten. For many mourners, the anticipation of the actual day is worse than when the day itself dawns; however, there are steps you can take to find balance during this season.

Plan ahead, assess traditions and communicate your wishes:

- Have a way to remember your baby during the holidays. This can mean having a special candle on a table, note paper to invite others to write a remembrance for you or your baby, donating in memory of your baby (and sharing this activity with others as a way for them to support you).
- Think about the traditions your family has enjoyed, and decide whether to do them this time. Sometimes familiarity helps, and sometimes it does not. There is nothing wrong with changing or adding a new tradition. Maybe this year, Thanksgiving means a trip away on your own, foregoing the family meal, or, maybe it means ordering your meal, rather than cooking it.
- It is important to communicate your wishes to your family and friends. They will be unsure of how to support you and may worry that they will make things worse if they mention your baby or your baby's name. Remind them you are always thinking about your baby, and that it provides comfort to know that others are remembering your baby too. Consider inviting them into the remembrance rituals you are planning.
- Responding to "Happy Holidays!" and other holiday greetings can leave those in mourning at a loss for how to respond. Consider saying, "all the best to you and your family" or just "thank you." Write out what you want to say in response to people who ask how you are doing and practice it so that you can deliver the response more smoothly.

Self-care:

- Being social might not seem appealing, but you may not need to avoid all invitations. Choose selectively, and have an exit strategy if you go to parties.
- Be good to yourself: focus on nutrition, rest, exercise. Examine your priorities and focus on doing things that are meaningful to you during this time, rather than the things you "should" do.
- Do something good for someone else – it is a proven way to feel better. Feeling joy is not a betrayal, nor does it mean you have "forgotten" your sweet baby. Allow yourself time for sadness, as well as feeling joyfulness.

Use your support system and organized grief support resources:

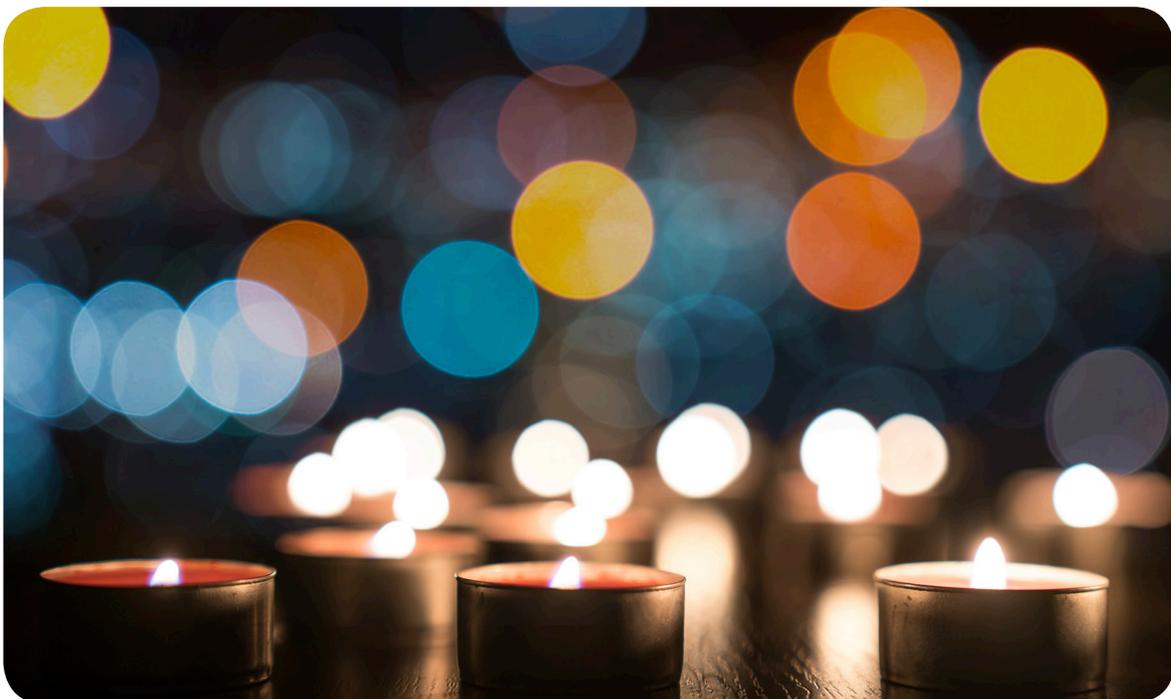
- Make sure that you have a shoulder to lean on to express your grief. This companion does not need to try to “fix” you, but simply listen and let you pour out your feelings.
- Access support groups and online resources for groups and printed materials.

And remember, you are not alone. The holidays are challenging for many people, and for many reasons. We are thinking of you.



The mention of my child’s name may bring tears to my eyes, but it never fails to bring music to my ears. If you really are my friend, let me hear the beautiful music of my child’s name. It soothes my broken heart, and sings to my soul.

– author unknown



H.E.A.R.T.strings Support Group Resources

Our support groups provide a place where grieving parents can find comfort and companionship among others who understand. Our groups are open to the community, and free of charge. For information and schedules, and for other support resources including a list of recommended therapists, please visit northsidepnl.com/support-gatherings. You may also email us at northsidepnl@gmail.com or call 404-851-8177.

Caring & Coping

This group is open to parents and grandparents who have lost a baby due to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth and newborn death. This group meets most months of the year. Check our website for dates.

Butterfly M.O.M.s (Missing Our Multiples)

A social and support group for parents who have experienced the loss of one or more multiples and who are coping with the joys and challenges of raising the surviving baby(s). This group meets periodically for Mom's nights out and play dates. Please contact us for more information about this group.

Rainbow P.A.L.S. (Pregnancy After Loss Support)

A social and support group especially for parents who are pregnant again after the loss of a baby, or are considering a subsequent pregnancy after loss. Our mission is to celebrate these new pregnancies while offering support for the anxiety, fear, and emotions that are present during pregnancy after loss. Please contact us for more information about this group.

A Time to Heal

A support group for parents who have made the painful decision to end a pregnancy due to maternal or fetal complications. Please contact us for more information on this group.

H.E.A.R.T.strings Companions

Matching parents with peer mentors when families need personal, one-on-one support. Please contact us for more information.



Support Groups for Siblings

Kate's Club - a non-profit organization that empowers children and teens after the death of a parent or sibling. For more information visit katesclub.org.

The Link Counseling Center - a non-profit community-counseling center since 1971 that provides quality, affordable, confidential counseling, psychotherapy and support groups to all ages. Their program for children: The House Next Door, thelink.org/house_next_door. Local groups are available, call 770-730-5858 for more information.

Website Resources

APlacetoRemember.com - Add your baby's name to a list to be remembered.

BabyAndInfantLoss.com - Offers keepsake products such as memorial and remembrance cards.

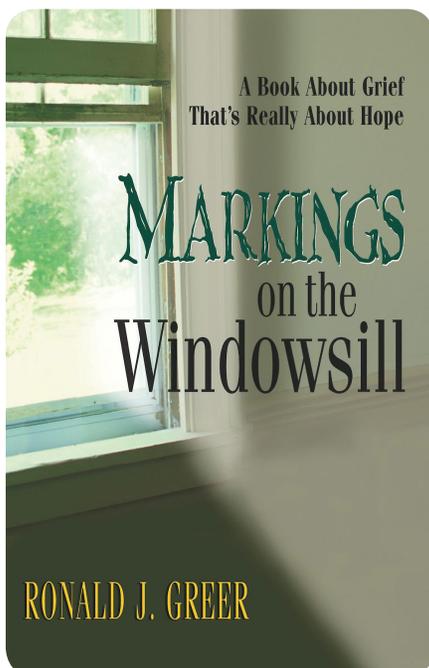
PregnancyAfterLoss.com - Support for pregnancy after the loss of a baby.

StillStandingMag.com - A collection of articles by bereaved parents.

Healing Hearts Book Club & Our Favorite Internet Resources

We want to hear from you...let us know what books or websites are helpful to you.
This quarter's book selection is:

Markings on the Windowsill: A Book About Grief That's Really About Hope by Ronald J. Greer



Book description: Ron Greer and his wife lost their two-year-old son Eric in a tragic automobile accident many years ago. In this brief, moving book, the author draws on his experiences as a father and as a pastoral counselor to offer hope, help, and healing to people who are grieving.

Spotlight on Jenna Abele, EDAC, Northside Hospital Facilities, Planning Coordinator

The H.E.A.R.T.strings office recently received a beautiful makeover, with the goal of providing a serene and peaceful place for consults and work. We are so very grateful to Jenna for her thoughtful design, which centered around the needs of our families and staff!

"I came into my position as Facilities Planner/Designer as an evolution.

I started off in residential design back in late 90's. After a few years of doing residential, I decided to switch over to Commercial because I could reach more people. Once I entered into the Commercial Design field, I realized that I wanted to be involved in something that had more meaning. I became increasingly aware over the years how people's workspaces affected their mood and sometimes attitude toward their job, especially when they were in a space that they were not happy in.

I grew up with a quadriplegic mother who became paralyzed when I was 11 years old. I spent many years with her in and out of hospitals sometimes for extended stays of weeks and months at a time. These experiences and memories had a strong impact on my life and my viewpoint of how surroundings affect people's mood and mental state, especially when dealing with stressful or scary situations. When Healthcare Design starting becoming popular in the design world around 2007, I decided that I wanted to make that my focus. I wanted to be a person who could provide nurturing and healing environments for patients, their families and the caregivers that provide the loving care that impacted so many people. The environments in which people have these experiences good or bad will be etched into their memories forever, therefore I wanted to provide a space that nurtures them through the process as much as possible."



Ask the Expert Q & A

Contributor: H.E.A.R.T.strings Staff

How long does grief last? When will I feel normal again?

With many physical illnesses, symptoms ease and then stop in a given time frame. Grief, however, does not behave like this. Instead, each person must work through it and adapt to their grief in their own, unique way. Grief is not a linear process and can be unpredictable. The intensity of grief will soften and change over time, but there will be triggers (such as anniversaries, seeing children who are the same age as your baby would be, etc.) which may leave you feeling like you're back to square one. These intense reactions are normal, and do not mean that you are getting "worse." Allow yourself to feel and explore your emotions along the way, as they each play a role in your journey and healing and use your support system when you are having those harder moments or days.

Some people view losing a baby as something you "get used to" rather than something you "get over." You, and those who know you may wish you could feel like your "old self" again. In many ways, you will not be the same person you were before your loss. This doesn't mean that things won't be good again, or that you won't ever be happy. Instead, you will find a new, different version of yourself that incorporates how you have been changed by this experience. Embrace this part of your journey as it honors the time you had with your baby – to see the world differently as a result of your experience is an important way to incorporate your baby's memory into your new, everyday life.



Gold Award Winner

We are pleased to share that our patient resource, the H.E.A.R.T.strings Survival Guide: Information and Guidance for Your Loss, was a Gold Winner in the Patient Handbook Category of the 35th Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards! Out of 4,000 entries, Gold Awards were given to 360 entries. We are grateful to the Northside Marketing department for their partnership in designing this important resource.

Parent-to-Parent

Dancing in the Rain

I was reminded the other day of one of my favorite quotes. It is actually the quote at the top of this blog..."Life is not about surviving the storm...it is about learning to dance in the rain." It is an anonymous quote that I read years ago. I have always liked it. It always made me think of strength in hard times. This quote took on a completely new meaning for me after my daughter's stillbirth.

I spent a lot of time just getting by. In the first days, I thought I was doing really well if I got up and took a shower. I made myself do that. After the first 2 or 3 weeks, I made a deal with myself..

"I decided that I could do anything for 15 minutes each day. My "anything," the thing I dreaded most was being "normal" for 15 minutes. That meant I would not be sad for 15 minutes. Not let my sadness bring me down for a whole 15 minutes. I could do it. Fifteen minutes and then, I could go back to being sad. As long as I knew I could go back to bed if I wanted or spend the afternoon crying if I wanted, I could handle the 15 minutes."

I know it may sound completely crazy, but it gave me something to focus on. A goal for the day. Sometimes, my fifteen minutes involved reading a fun magazine or a book that made me laugh. Sometimes it meant catching up on my favorite soap (which is Young and the Restless, BTW :) I watched the clock most of the time and when the time was up, I went back to being sad. I don't know if this makes sense, but I needed the time of being sad. I needed to feel what I was feeling. I needed to have that time with my baby, thinking of her and mourning her. There were days when I couldn't wait for the 15 minutes to be over so I could get back to reality. I needed to stand in the storm, so to speak. To be knocked over by the hurricane force winds that kept pounding me. I was in survival mode and I needed to survive the storm that was my loss.

An interesting thing happened. I don't even know when it did, but it happened. It was so gradual that I never even noticed. I stopped watching the clock. I stopped counting the 15 minutes. I don't even know when I noticed that I had begun spending more time each day doing something happy. Of course, then I felt guilty that I had been happy. But I shouldn't have. I guess you can say that I was learning to dance again. I just didn't know it.

Even though the storm of that awful time had passed, nothing was the same. Nothing ever will be the same. So, I had found my way of being normal again. Many people call it the "new normal." I guess you can say it is like dancing in the rain.

I read something the other day that a friend posted on her Facebook page. She was talking about rainbows and how you can't see a rainbow unless you have had the rain and the sun. I love what she wrote. It is so very true. My daughter has brought me so much sunshine. Her life and death have taught me so much about myself. If it weren't for her, I do not know that I would be the person I am. She shapes me every day. She has taught me so much about dancing in the rain.

There comes a time in life, after something gut wrenching and horrible has happened, that you have to make some decisions. Are you going to sink in the horrible hole that is grief or are you going to swim in the vast ocean that is life? Are you going to let the storm knock you down or are you going to get out there and dance right in that rain?

I have chosen to dance and it is a wonderful dance filled with hope and laughter and gratitude, and yes, sadness. This dance is mine and my daughter's...it is what we are doing together.

I hope you learn to dance again, too, and that the dance is precious and sweet and honors your baby the way that you want it to.

Melissa Petersen, RNC, MS, WHNP-BC
Chasing Rainbows blog
Northsidepnl.blogspot.com



Rainbows on the Horizon

This space is dedicated to the babies born after the heartache of loss, our Rainbows. Your good news is encouraging and we would like to congratulate you. Birth announcements can be submitted to the H.E.A.R.T.strings office by email at northsidepnl@gmail.com or by calling 404-851-8177. Please send us your photos in the highest possible resolution.

After losing our precious Matthew Gutierrez on December 14, 2015 we are proud to announce John Ignacio Gutierrez was born February 12, 2018 at 8:48 a.m. weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces and measured 20 inches long. We know our little angel will always watch over his little brother the way he watches over us.

-Laura & Ignacio Gutierrez



John Ignacio Gutierrez

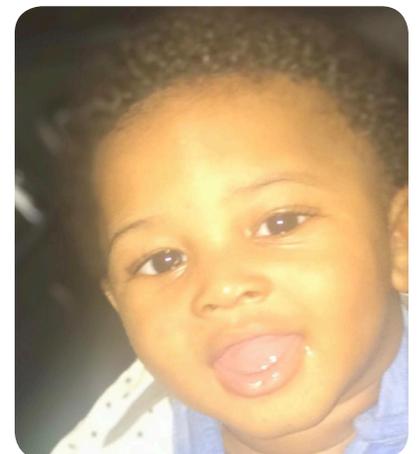


Nora Wren Clickner

My husband and I love what Heartstrings does, and what you stand for. We were so comforted by your service since we lost our daughter Alethia Belle on December 2, 2016 to Turner's Syndrome. We will never forget her, and it's so nice to know there are people who remember her alongside us. We have since welcomed a new little girl, Nora Wren, into our family on September 24, 2017. She has brought so much joy into our lives, and we consider ourselves immensely blessed.

-Lauren and Cody Clickner

The Rainbow After The Storm.
Baby Allen



The McPherson family is happy to announce the arrival of our rainbow baby Carson Michael McPherson born July 21, 2018. He is our rainbow after the loss of our sweet Emma Grace, who was born sleeping on July 30, 2015. We are now enjoying our sleepless nights and endless snuggles!

-Michael & Katie McPherson



Carson Michael McPherson



Hudson Lewis Cunningham

We welcomed our rainbow baby Hudson Lewis Cunningham on May 11, 2018 weighing in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces. He was handpicked by his sister in heaven, Nicole Jean Cunningham. He has been such a blessing in our lives and we love him beyond belief!

-Brandy Davison & Phillip Cunningham



Thank You for Your Support!

We appreciate your donations. Much of the support the H.E.A.R.T.strings office provides to families relies on the generosity of donors like you.

H.E.A.R.T.strings Legacy Fund

- ♦ **In memory of Natalie Grace Atkinson**
Steven & Denise Atkinson
- ♦ **In memory of Olivia Anne Barta**
Kelley Napier
- ♦ **In memory of Evelyn Berkenkamp**
Kathleen Spencer & the AFLAC family
- ♦ **In memory of Abby, Morgan, Lexi and Baby Boy Billeter**
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Claire & Jeff Barnett

Reagan Marie Teddy Bear Fund

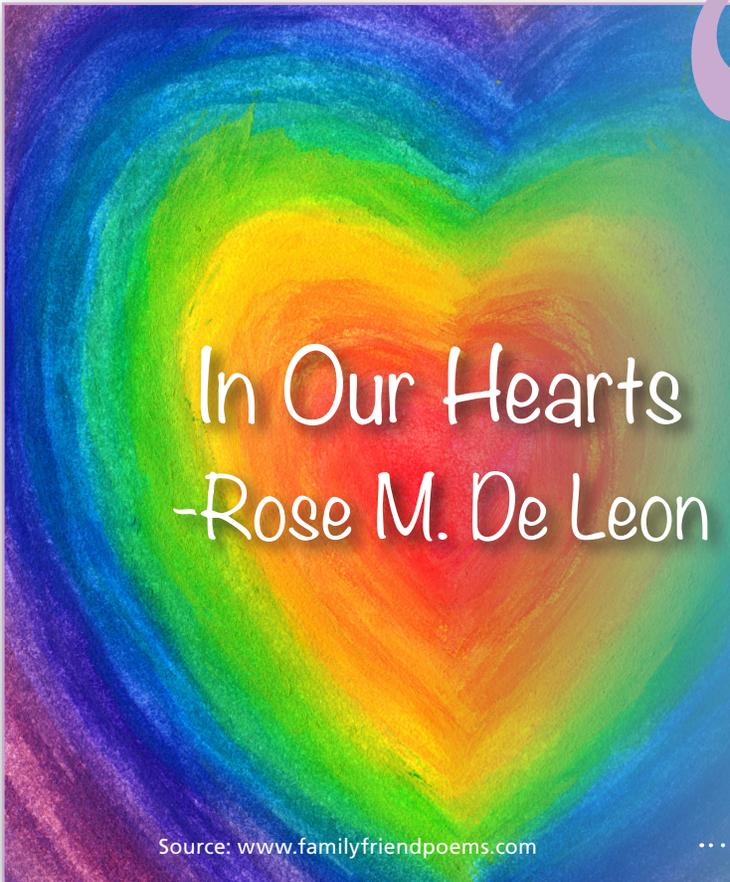
- ♦ **In memory of Patrick, Joseph and Frances Murphy**
Shayne & Rachel Murphy
- ♦ **In memory of Harper Ruth Sommers**
Megan Bascone

Atlanta Walk to Remember Fund

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Gifts-In-Kind

- Blankets and gowns from Judy Armstrong
- Burial wraps from Alma Harshe
- Preemie clothing and beautiful keepsake bracelets in memory of Sofia Victoria Garcia from her mother, Ana Sofia Garcia
- Blankets from Elisabeth Dilling
- Blankets from Sarah Beth Kokoszka
- Hats from Urmila Chokshi
- Blankets from Florence Dukes
- Keepsake boxes in memory of Asher Knox Martindale from Lindsey Martindale
- Handmade blankets and hats from Pam Emerson, in memory of her grandson, Harrison Bryan Brinson
- Hand and foot mold kits in memory of Amelia Elisabeth Schmidt on her second birthday
- Blanket and keepsake boxes in memory of Grace Emily Palmieri from Marianne, Brian, Bobby and Caroline Warner
- Keepsake boxes in memory of Makenzie Cheree Conaway from Chandria Conaway
- Small quilts and handmade blankets from the Georgia Chapter Quilts for Kids
- Handmade hats from Ericka Valles
- Teddy bears in memory of Harrison Bryan Brinson from Samantha and Bryan Brinson



In Our Hearts
-Rose M. De Leon

Source: www.familyfriendpoems.com

We thought of you with love today,
But that is nothing new.
We thought about you yesterday
And days before that, too.
We think of you in silence.
We often speak your name.
Now all we have is memories
And your picture in a frame.
Your memory is our keepsake
With which we'll never part.
God has you in his keeping.
We have you in our heart.

Thank
You!

Your generosity makes a tremendous difference in our mission!

Our Partners

Canton Funeral Home & Cemetery at
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Joy Cannis Photography

Love's Foundation

Northside Hospital Atlanta Auxiliary

If you would like to make a donation to the H.E.A.R.T.strings Perinatal Bereavement Program, please go to our website at northsidepnl.com and click on the "donations" tab or call us at 404-851-8177. No donation is too large or too small. We are asked often to give guidance on items needed by the office.

We are always in need of:

- Hand and foot mold kits
- Kleenex boxes or small, "pocket" sized Kleenex packs
- Premie sized clothing for boys and girls
- Knitted or crocheted blankets in all sizes
- SD memory cards
- \$10 Starbucks cards for families to use



We also have a great new way to give back to the H.E.A.R.T.strings office by linking your Kroger Plus card to our office. Please follow this link to get started: give.northside.com/kroger-plus-card-rewards

#LIGHTSFORGOOD
Buy a Light. Share Your Light. Change Lives.
Donate and start a fundraising page this holiday season
to Celebrate, Honor or Remember a loved one.
give.northside.com/lightsforgood

As you think about how best to remember your babies during this time of year, and if looking for donation opportunities is part of that process for your family, we wanted to share this opportunity with you. Through the Northside Foundation "Lights for Good" program, you can designate a financial contribution to H.E.A.R.T.strings. Once on the Lights for Good page, select "Make a Donation/Start a Fundraiser" button, then choose the H.E.A.R.T.strings option. *You are in our thoughts during this often challenging season.*



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