

Caring & Coping

H.E.A.R.T. strings
PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT
& PALLIATIVE CARE
AT NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL

A Publication of the Northside Hospital
H.E.A.R.T.strings
Perinatal Bereavement Office



Contact Information

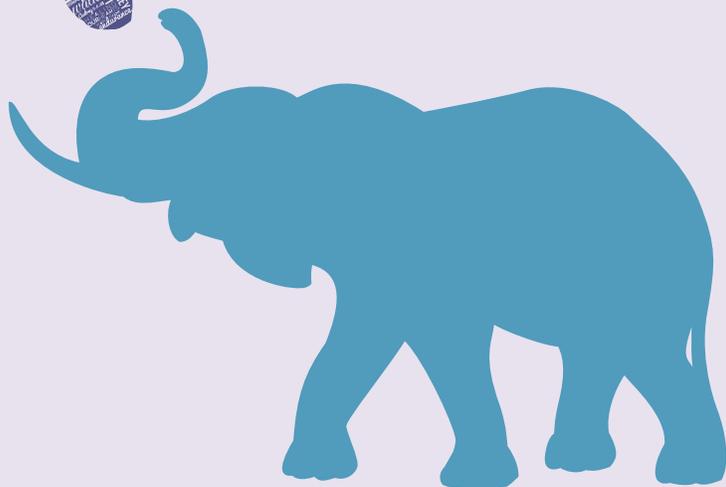
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Submissions to our newsletter and website are welcomed and much appreciated! Submissions may be e-mailed, mailed, or faxed to our office.

SAVE THE DATE



**2018 Atlanta Walk to Remember:
Sunday, October 14, 2-4 p.m.**



ATLANTA WALK TO REMEMBER

www.northsidepnl.com/atlantawalktoremember.html

We are excited to share the date for this year's Atlanta Walk to Remember and hope that you will join us! This very special event is free, and open to the public. It is a time for us to come together



as a community to remember and celebrate these precious babies. Families are welcome – we will have our Sibling Station and special memorial activities again. This year's special keepsake is a beautiful pendant which can either be ordered as a necklace or key chain. It can be personalized, or ordered with our elephant logo. We are grateful to Keri Mullennix for designing these for us. Registration information will open in August, so please check our website, follow the Atlanta Walk to Remember on Facebook, or send us your email address so that you can receive announcements about the event.

GRADY'S GIFT - BY KERI MULLENNIX

After nearly 3 years of countless doctor appointments, testing, 2 failed IUI's and an unsuccessful round of IVE, we conceived our precious Grady. My husband, Chris and I were filled with the incredible joy of experiencing pregnancy with our "Little P-Nut." Our 36 week appointment showed that Grady's growth had begun to slow and our doctors decided that it would be best to go ahead and induce the next week. At our final doctor's appointment, the day prior to his scheduled entrance into the world, we received the devastating news that he no longer had a heartbeat. He was gone, and I had just felt him move the evening prior. Grady was born still and silent into the world on February 24, 2017. His unexplained passing was traumatic and heartbreaking. However the 37 weeks he lived next to my heart was nothing short of a miracle.

In the weeks following Grady's passing, I was given several pieces of jewelry in his memory. It was important for me to have something with me at all times as a reminder of him, not only for myself but for the world to see. My worst fear was, and still is, for my child to be forgotten. After about 5 months into my grief, I began creating jewelry pieces for myself and my family to wear. I have a strong desire to share this with other bereaved families; to give them a reminder of their children and to let them know that they are not walking this path alone. We can all find a way to eventually begin to heal and take steps to move forward in the cycles of grief. To share God's love, hope, encouragement and healing through life's most trying storms: This is Grady's Gift.



H.E.A.R.T. STRINGS

PARTNERS WITH CARTER'S

We rely on donations to offer beautiful clothing, blankets and wraps of all sizes for families experiencing the unexpected and devastating loss of a baby. The clothing and blankets become treasured keepsakes for parents as they create memories with their babies. Carter's, the leading brand of children's clothing, gifts and accessories in America, has generously provided preemie clothing and receiving blankets for our program. This donation from Carter's will enable us to comfortably supply families with a special outfit that their baby can wear as precious memories are made.

In addition, Carter's also supports our NICU with donations of preemie clothing and is a sponsor of Miracle Babies, a program run through the Northside Hospital Foundation, which provides resources and financial assistance to families with critically ill newborns in our NICU.

We are grateful to Carter's for their compassionate support of this community!



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&

carter's
with you from the start™

Once you are real, you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.
- Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

MY VANISHING TWIN

Submitted by Melissa Kelly, member of Butterfly M.O.M.s (Missing Our Multiples), our social and support group for parents raising surviving multiples.

I will never forget the moment we found out we were having twins. My husband joked about having twins prior to our appointment (they run in my family) but I brushed it off. As I lay there watching our sweet baby for the first time on the monitor I jokingly proclaimed see I told you there's only one! And not even a moment later the nurse replies, no there's not and all of a sudden two little babies appeared. It was the purest most beautiful, unexpected moment in my life.

When we got home we began researching twins. I mean who doesn't want to know if they are secretly high fiving and communicating? But with all that joy we also came across the term "vanishing twin." The doctor never mentioned it and while we found the idea of one of the twins just "vanishing" out of nowhere horrifying we pushed it to the back of our minds and made our motto full throttle to happiness and focused on the joy of the present moment.

We saw our babies with strong, beautiful heartbeats twice. On our third visit we expected nothing less. I remember seeing the monitor and seeing two babies and I secretly felt a huge sigh of relief no one vanished. But although no one vanished, one did not have a heartbeat.

It was the most confusing and painful time of our lives. I never even heard of vanishing twin or twinless twin up until my pregnancy and now that's going to be part of my life? The truth is, vanishing twin effects a quarter of all twin pregnancies. It occurs when one twin miscarries and then is reabsorbed by the other twin, mother, or placenta giving the appearance of vanishing. (American Pregnancy Association).

We found out the day before we were going to tell the world but how do you tell your friends and parents well, we lost one baby but we have another in there! And like us people didn't know what to say. They attempted to help by telling us to focus on the one baby or I couldn't allow myself to be upset because it wouldn't be good for the other baby. It felt like limbo. I didn't feel like I could mourn or be as happy as I was.

Every visit thereafter I expected to only see baby B but nope, my sweet baby A was still there. My twin did not vanish until 20 weeks. Every appointment there was joy and grief. Some appointments I wished the baby would just vanish so I could move on then I would feel bad for wishing such a thing and other appointments I felt so grateful I still had him in some way. When baby A finally vanished it felt like the moment I was told there wasn't a heartbeat all over again. A second round of overwhelming grief that Google didn't warm me about hit.

All this happened while week after week a new photo of baby B was posted on social media. Admirers of my bump only heard the joy. No one knew what I was going through and it felt like a lie. I mean how much of a buzz kill would that be if I told the truth?

I struggled with my secrecy of my miscarriage. I placed judgement on myself. I remember thinking it's just a miscarriage you are making a big deal out of nothing. Your doctor, your church, your peers don't even think it's a big deal. I told myself don't make it weird or upset other people. I told myself I needed to be happy because at least I still had one.

But that wasn't my truth. I was allowing people I didn't even know to judge and dictate my grief.

Then, one day I realized I could hold two truths. I didn't need others acceptance I only needed my own on this journey. I could mourn AND be happy simultaneously without guilt. I did nothing wrong. I loved both my babies. When the conversation was appropriate I began talking openly about the happiness I did feel. It didn't have to be doom and gloom. There was joy to be remembered and dang it if anything I want to remember the joy over the pain. Don't get me wrong I still cry. But now, I allow myself to "ride the wave of emotion" if it comes I'm not going to push it away like I did, I'm not going to shame myself for loving. I allow the emotions to happen without judgment. And honestly, this was a huge step in my grief process. Once I allowed this to happen I named my lost baby. It was so impersonal calling him A which my doctors and I did throughout the pregnancy. We finally named the baby, Gabriel. All of a sudden Gabriel became more "tangible." I can't describe it but it solidified that he was a person and not an object that had to be talked about in past tense!



When we named Gabriel it became easier to mourn an actual person. My husband, baby and I now celebrate Gabriel on the day we found out we would no longer be a family of 4. It was a sad day, the saddest day of our life. But now, it's a very calm and peaceful day. Each year, I pick up flowers and we one by one toss them into a stream and watch them until we can no longer see them. And then to allow my son to honor his sibling we give him balloon and let him release it (minus this year because he wanted the "ball.") This small ritual honored my husband, me, my son and Gabriel. People may not understand it, it may make others sad or uncomfortable but it allowed us to accept our reality and reality is that baby will always be part of our lives and Gabriel will always be part of our story.



And just because Gabe vanished doesn't mean he has to vanish from our hearts.

DAVITA KIDNEY CARE SUPPORTS LOVE'S FOUNDATION

Founded in 2014 by Jennifer Speed in memory of her daughter, Love Speed, Love's Foundation was created to provide financial assistance to families as they make final arrangements for their babies. On February 6, 2018 DaVita Kidney Care presented Jennifer Speed of Love's Foundation with a donation of \$6,500 to support our families.

My daughter, Love Speed, was born on March 23, 2014. Her timely birth was greatly anticipated by not only me but by her father, Scott, and older sister. Needless to say, we were all devastated with her premature delivery. She only lived for shortly over an hour and my life was forever changed.

Shortly after returning home from the hospital I shared with Scott that I wanted to do something for other families who will unfortunately have to endure such a tragic loss. I felt an overwhelming need to not only help other families but to make a purpose out of the birth of Love as well. It was very important to me, and still is, that Love's brief time on this earth impacted someone else's life.



Hence, Love's Foundation was born. The foundation is a 501(C)3 non-profit that helps financially assist families with making final arrangements for their baby who passed away due to premature birth, stillbirth or complications at birth. To date the foundation has assisted 30 families. Each and every family is beyond grateful for the assistance given. My heart breaks and is full of joy every time a family reaches out for assistance because I can see Love impacting lives even though she is not here in the physical. I can not ask for more than that.

This year's Run for Love, a 5K/1K run/walk to raise funds for the Foundation, will take place on Saturday, August 25. Details at lovesfoundation.org

If you would like to volunteer for this event, please contact H.E.A.R.T.strings at 404-851-8177.

CROCHETED WITH LOVE

Miss Florence is a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, having recently welcomed her eighth great-grandchild into the world.

She has always loved helping people. She spent many years teaching Sunday school, bringing vesper services to elderly residents in assisted living, and working with 1st-5th grades students in elementary school as a volunteer teaching assistant.

After learning to sew her own clothes at the age of 12, Miss Florence began to crochet. She taught herself from a book at the age of 14. She has made numerous afghans and throws for family and friends over the years.

She is still a busy lady at the age of 94. Most recently she started crocheting baby blankets for Perinatal Loss at Northside. In 2004, on Christmas Day, her second great-grandchild was stillborn. She remembered the kind and thoughtful gifts given by others to her granddaughter, and she decided that she would like to do that for others. She has donated over forty blankets, and currently has 5 more ready to deliver. These items are dedicated to the memory of Emmie Jane, along with a meaningful Bible verse. One of her favorites is – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.” Rev. 21:4



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

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL H.E.A.R.T.STRINGS MEMORIAL SERVICE

We are aware of how important it is to remember your baby and how healing rituals can be to the wounded hearts of those who grieve. For this reason, the H.E.A.R.T.strings office joins the Northside Hospital chaplains as they sponsor a memorial service on the first Sunday in May and the first Sunday in November to honor the memory of the babies for whom we have cared and who have died during the previous six months. Our service is a non-sectarian candle-lighting service with music, poems, and readings and is held at the Northside Hospital Atlanta campus.

This ceremony offers the opportunity to have a special time of dedication and reflection. Babies will be honored by having their names read during the service. Parents are encouraged to bring a flower to be incorporated into an arrangement as a part of the ceremony. A reception with refreshments will follow the ceremony.

If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend, please call 404-851-8754.



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

- A.A. Milne

ONE-ON-ONE GRIEF SUPPORT

Available through the new H.E.A.R.T.strings Companions Program

Do you feel that personal, one-on-one mentorship would benefit you in your grief journey? This new program matches trained volunteer mentors who have experienced the loss of a baby, with bereaved parents for personal, one-on-one support and companionship. H.E.A.R.T.strings will seek to match people with similar experiences when possible, and will monitor the matches to make sure both parties are comfortable.

If you are interested in being matched with a mentor, please contact us at northsidepnl@gmail.com or call **404-851-8177**.

HOSPITAL TOURS

Special “Re-Entry” Tours now Available by Appointment

We know that one of the hardest things facing you after you have suffered the loss of your baby is the thought of coming back into the hospital. Whether it is for your own appointments or to visit someone, the idea of stepping through those doors fills you with fear. If it would help to meet someone from our office to take you into the building and to re-visit areas where you may have stayed, we would be honored to do so. We can do as much or as little as you desire – you set the parameters. Contact us if you would like to set up a time.



RESOURCES FOR SIBLINGS

We have a great list of books for children experiencing a loss.

- **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.

HEALING HEARTS BOOK CLUB

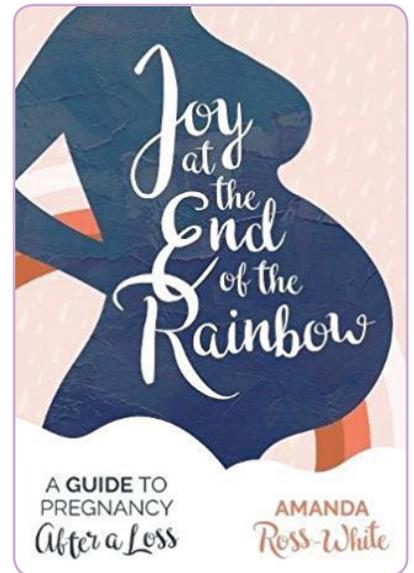
We want to hear from you.....let us know what books or websites are helpful to you. We will highlight a new book or two each newsletter.

This quarter's book selection is:

“Joy at the End of the Rainbow”

by Amanda Ross-White

This book is a month by month guide to pregnancy after loss. It won the American Journal of Nursing's Book of the Year for Consumer Health in 2017.



“TO LIVE IN HEARTS WE LEAVE BEHIND IS NOT TO DIE.”

Thomas Campbell



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(ies). 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.



RAINBOWS ON THE HORIZON

We would love to know if you have a new baby. 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.

We joyfully welcomed our beautiful rainbow baby, Hope, on January 28, 2018, just one day shy of her brother Harrison's first birthday in Heaven. Hope is loved and adored by her mommy, daddy, big sister Kate, and big brother Harrison in Heaven.

- *The Brinson Family*

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

- *Laura & Ignacio Gutierrez*

The Mora Family is elated to announce that they have been twice blessed with twins, Sparrow Christina Mora (4 pounds 7 ounces & 18.5 inches long) & Teo Sergio Mora (5 pounds 6 ounces & 18 inches long), born December 10, 2017. Sparrow & Teo are siblings to angel baby Nala, who was born on March 23, 2016. Sparrow & Teo serve as proof that God answers prayers and that after every storm there is a rainbow of hope.

- *The Mora Family*

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 2nd, 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 24th, 2017. She has brought so much joy into our lives, and we consider ourselves immensely blessed.

- *Lauren and Cody Clickner*



Hope Cathey Brinson



Matthew Gutierrez



Sparrow & Teo Mora



Alethia Belle

Dear Cameron, I saw you again today
The visions in my head just never go away
Of holding you swaddled up next to my heart
Where the love for my baby grew right from the start.

I never imagined when I entered that day
Hand in hand with your Daddy on your birthday
That I'd walk through those doors with you kicking inside
Then leave in a wheelchair, empty arms by my side.

The numbness set in, with no answers to find
How could I walk away and just leave you behind?
The words that they offered were kind and sincere,
But they'd never replace the emptiness I feared.

I held you for hours, the tears fell like rain
And in the blink of an eye, life would never be the same
The years just keep passing; so much has changed
But our baby lives forever in the memories that remain.

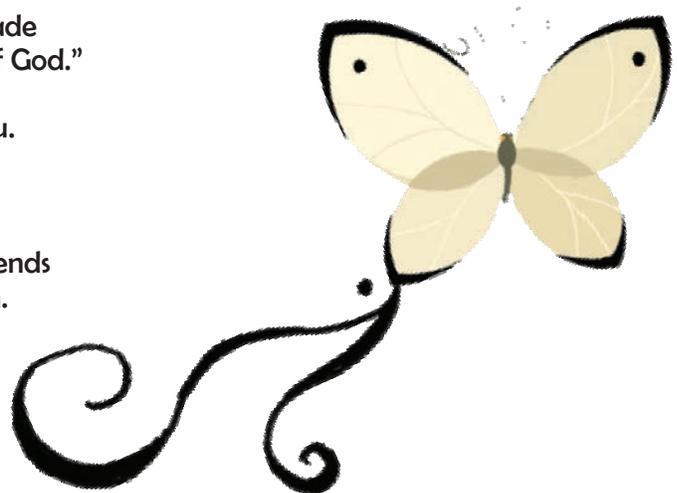
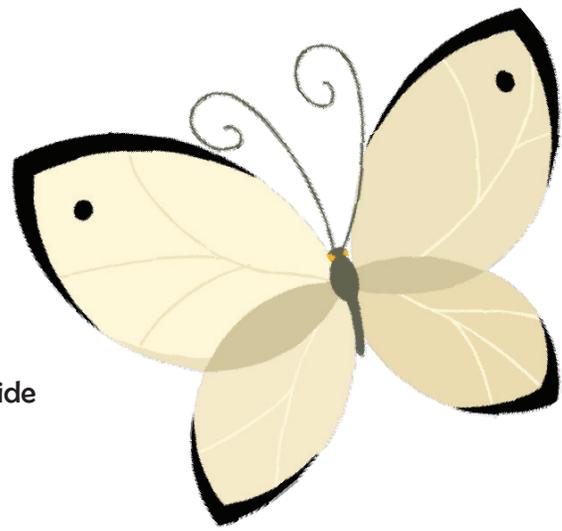
Sometimes I look up at the stars in the sky
And I sit there in wonder, still asking Him, "Why?"
Then I hear the sweet voice of your sister, age 7
"It's o.k. Mama; God must have needed more angels in Heaven."

They never got to meet you, or hold your sweet hand
You'll never get to help them build castles in the sand
But you're with them and they know you through the keepsakes that we've shared
And in their hearts is where they hold you; they'll always keep you there.

Now I walk in your honor, surrounded by others
With Daddies and Siblings and still grieving Mothers
As we gather together, a few tell their story
While I just sit in my silence still guarding your memory

I know that you're with me; you're not just a façade
For your tombstone reads, "Born into the Arms of God."
From my arms to His, as you peacefully flew
You carried my heart and my love there with you.

As the butterfly flutters, it has *new* meaning now
One that brings comfort and peace somehow
As a symbol that your life, although short, never ends
You're just waiting at Home till we see you again.



In loving memory of Cameron August, March 10, 2002

Submitted by Debbie Dennigmann

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 Donations:

Gifts-In-Kind

- **Preemie hats donated by Simone Denny in memory of Micah J. Gresham-Chappelle**
- **Handmade hats from Amanda Mimms**
- **Burial gowns and wraps from Nancy Pedersen**
- **Care packs, keepsake jewelry and crocheted hats from Keri & Chris Mullennix in memory of Grady**
- **Burial gowns, blankets and wraps from Alma Harshe**
- **Handmade blankets from Yana and Patty Hurst**
- **Handmade blankets from Ms. Florence Dukes**
- **Memory boxes from Chandria Conaway**
- **Memory boxes from Ondrea Wojtowicz in memory of Sophie Marie Wojtowicz**
- **Beautiful blankets from Lindsay Rhondenbaugh in memory of Rebecca Joy Rhodenbaugh**
- **Wraps, blankets, notebooks & memory boxes from Stephanie Bonick in memory of Nathan Bonick**
- **Muslin baby swaddles from Kelly Henderson in memory of Hope Isabella Henderson**
- **Beautiful hats, booties and a blanket from Gwendolyn Mathis in memory of her grandson, Keith Bernard Holsey, Jr.**

Monetary Donations

- **In memory of Rosemary Bowen Yeager**
Patricia Busby Mims
- **In memory of Liam Joseph Nulty**
Mary Nulty
- **In memory of Matthew Morrison**
Mike, Holly, Tay, Ry and Jack Morrison
- **In memory of Grady Scott Mullennix**
Anonymous donor
- **In memory of Lovebug Clayton**
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Erbesfield
- **In memory of Jackson and Aiden Yeager**
Stacey Yeager
- **Donation**
Henry Chandler
- **In memory of Molly Claire Hines**
Loren and Joanne Hartman
Michelle Hines
Garland Hines
- **In memory of Baby Wojtowicz**
Tina Walker
- **In memory of Caedin Smith**
Kim Laney
- **In memory of Benjamin Raphael Hart**
Cafria Hart

Reagan Marie Teddy Bear Fund

- **In memory of Charlotte Lillian Cahoon**
Laura Cahoon

“THE BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN THE WORLD CANNOT BE SEEN NOR EVEN TOUCHED, BUT JUST FELT IN THE HEART.”

Helen Keller



Thank You!

YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE IN OUR MISSION!

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 the link to get started: <https://give.northside.com/kroger-plus-card-rewards>



NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL

northside.com