

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



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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.



MANAGING THE HOLIDAYS

The “most wonderful time of the year” isn’t always so wonderful for those who are grieving. What is, for most people, a happy time filled with celebration, family, food, and friends, can be a time of increasing dread, loneliness, sadness, and anxiety for those who have lost their baby. Whatever holidays you may normally celebrate may feel very different this year. Whether this is the first year without your baby or the 10th, you may not feel the same about the holiday season as you once did. Be easy on yourself.



You are grieving & experiencing the holidays may hurt. Here are some tips to remember:

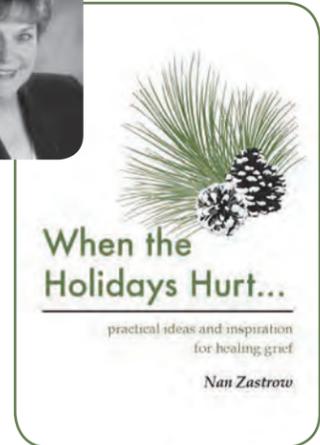


- Limit social gatherings, especially if you feel anxiety and panic about being with a crowd.
- Change your traditions. Even a small change, like changing the menu or date of a gathering can make it feel different.
- Consider taking a trip with your partner—you have had a different year; it is ok to have a different holiday tradition.
- Give a memorial gift to an organization that is special to you, in memory of your baby.
- Buy or make a special ornament in memory of your baby.
- Don't overextend yourself with holiday shopping or baking, unless you feel up to it
- Give yourself grace----it is ok to leave holiday functions early or not attend at all.
- Have an exit plan, so that if you need to leave a party or family dinner early, you can make a fast escape.
- Consider talking to your close family and friends or writing them a letter, explaining what a hard holiday season this is for you and how they can help to understand you.

Remember that you are supported and that you need to do what is best for YOU. Warm wishes from all of us in the H.E.A.R.T.strings Perinatal Bereavement Office for a special holiday season.

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:

- *When the Holidays Hurt* by Nan Zastrow. A collection of articles and essays, this book discusses how to manage the holiday season after the loss of a loved one.

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

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Keshia Murray

My name is Keshia Murray. I am a volunteer at Northside Hospital Forsyth with the H.E.A.R.T.strings office. I have been volunteering with the monthly Caring and Coping support group since June of this year. In 2012 my husband and I experienced a loss of our own. Our daughter, Lauren, was born and passed away at 24 weeks gestation. After our loss we attended the Caring and Coping group in Atlanta for nearly a year. Our time at these monthly meetings meant so much to us and helped us though the toughest months of our lives. I am humbled to be volunteering and offering support to families who face the unthinkable tragedy of losing their baby. Northside offers so much for families in these situations and I am honored to be a part of it and working alongside some pretty amazing people.



YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Send us your email address! We are creating a database so that we can occasionally communicate with you about upcoming events and announcements. *We will NOT share this information publicly.* You will have the option to "opt out" at any time. Our goal is to help connect you to community events and resources. Send us an email to northsidepnl@gmail.com, and simply tell us you'd like to be added to the list.

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

MEMORIES FROM THE 2016 ATLANTA WALK TO REMEMBER

Our staff loves to read books and realize just like books, each of our patients have story. We are introduced to saddest during some of their saddest and darkest chapters, but we always enjoy seeing what's next in the story. Sometimes it's a happy chapter or just the next one – most of all, it's a new one and we are grateful to share in this part of the story.

The 2016 Atlanta Walk to Remember was held on Sunday, October 2 at the Northside Alpharetta Medical Campus. Although the day was beautiful and drenched with sunshine, the collection of stories is what shined the brightest. Over 500 people came out for our 12th Annual Walk. Before we walked together, we heard from four moms that have taken their devastating loss and have in turn, created programs that offer hope and support to our community. Christy Ziegler, founder of the Children's Park of Georgia, was our keynote speaker. Following the loss of her twin daughter, Alexis, more than a decade ago, the vision for a space where she could go to process her grief took shape. The purpose of the park will be to celebrate the lives of all children, those with us and those who've gone on. We have included a copy of Christy's speech in this newsletter, as well as a link to the website for the park.

Following Christy, we highlighted three other stories of hope and community created by families:

Five years ago, Bob and Cindy Baima worked with H.E.A.R.T.strings to create the Reagan Marie Teddy Bear Fund, with the mission of providing a teddy

bear to every patient so that she has something to hold when she leaves the hospital. The bears are a symbol of community and support, and the program honors the memory of the Baima's first child, Reagan Marie who was born with Trisomy 18 and lived just a short time. Jennifer Speed created Love's Foundation in memory of her daughter, Love, who was born at just 21 weeks in March, 2014. The goal of the Foundation is to provide financial support to families as they make final arrangements for their babies. The Run for Love, a 5K run/walk, is the primary fundraiser for this effort. Emily and Steven Schuerman's daughter Lily died three days after her full-term birth in January, 2014.

They received a packet of precious metal clay (donated by another family) which was used to make an imprint of Lily's fingerprint and made into a silver charm. As one of their most treasured keepsakes of Lily's life, they have provided the clay to our program for families suffering losses such as theirs.

These are only four out of many more stories.

Erika and Brent Herrin, along with their two sons, held the sign and led our group around the campus. The Herrin's son, Matthew, was diagnosed with Trisomy 13, born on Feb. 15. Without knowing how many days, hours, or possibly only seconds he would live, the Herrin family joined together and marked his birth with a blessing and baptism by their priest right there in the operating room, just moments after delivery. The Herrins and the rest of the event attendees followed a pathway of flower pinwheels along the walk to remember their sons and daughters.



Attendees were invited to include a story about their baby to be published in the event program had the opportunity to join with others by reading their stories published in the event program handed out, add a flower to our trellis arch or enjoy the (sounds) brought by Metro Music Therapy. Three families assisted in the release of butterflies, which are making their home now in that same environment...a lasting remembrance of our special day. The event area was saturated with images of love – chalk drawings and messages on the pavement, memorial name signs in the lawn, balloons with tied-on personalized messages in the sky, and love and music filling all the space in between. The great thing is that the story keeps going ...and we love that we have the honor of continuing to know and be a part of those stories.



A BIG THANK YOU TO:

- Northside Hospital
- Craneware
- Joy Cannis Photography
- Metro Music Therapy
- Sweet Birdie Blessings
- Express Copy Print & Ship
- Balloons Over Atlanta
- Brody's Boxes
- King of Pops



ATLANTA WALK TO REMEMBER

KEYNOTE SPEECH *By Christy Zeigler*

Thank you for having me. It is an honor to have been asked to be here with you all on this very special day to honor our babies that we can't hold in our arms, but who forever live in our hearts.

The project I am here to tell you about is the Children's Park of Georgia. The purpose of the park is to celebrate the lives of all children – those with us and those who've gone on.

It will be a therapeutic garden. This relatively new idea in landscape architecture refers to a garden that is specifically designed for the particular needs of the people who will use it.

Though named the "Children's Park" it is truly just as much for the moms, dads and any who are struggling as much as it is for the children it honors.

Every family has their own story...their history of experiences that fill their hearts. The Children's Park of Georgia will be a place where all of these stories come together in a beautiful tribute. Every monument, bench, dedicated tree, and stone that lines the sidewalks will celebrate the life of a child...each representing a story. The park itself will be a symbolic and artistic tribute to recognize the enormous joys and sometimes devastating trials families may journey through.

The idea for the park began from my grief journey that started over a decade ago.

In fact, this month marks 12 years since my due date in 2004 when I was pregnant with twins – Alexis and Mason. Unfortunately, they were born 3 months early on July 18th. Alexis lived for 17 hours. Mason had many very close calls in the NICU but finally came home with us that October.

The first thing I remember about this time was how it affected my mind. It all happened so unexpectedly. As you can relate I'm sure, loss hit me like a ton of brick. Like many of you, I had planned and dreamed so much for my babies. I read every pregnancy book I could get my hands on. My husband and I had prepared the nursery and had bought the stroller, car seats and other gear. We were prepared for the journey we thought we were taking. Then, all of a sudden, that road was washed away as if by a flash flood. I was lost and disoriented.



I remember one evening vividly sitting in a rocking chair, at Northside Atlanta, trying to make a list of what I needed to buy at the store and I physically couldn't write what I was thinking. It was just chicken scratch on the paper. In this time, I was in survival mode for Mason and didn't have time to grieve or process. He would have a good day and then the next be crashing. So, I think parts of my brain just blocked off to focus on what I needed to in the moment.

IN OUR HEARTS

Rose M. De Leon

“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.”

Source: www.familyfriendpoems.com

CRAFTING CORNER

With the holidays coming up, consider making a special ornament for the baby you are remembering. All you need is a clear glass ball ornament, some cardstock cut into strips, some ribbon or twine, or a picture of your baby.

- Remove the top from the glass ornament
- Write special thoughts, memories, feelings on strips of cardstock and place the strips in the ornament OR if you have a small picture of your baby, place the picture in the ball
- Replace the top on the glass ornament and tie your favorite colored ribbons on the top
- Other ideas of items to place in your remembrance ornament: a copy of your baby's footprints, his/her birthday printed on cardstock and cut into a shape, letter beads with your baby's name letters.

Consider making a special wreath or tree in honor and memory of your baby...decorate with items that remind you of your pregnancy and of your baby. Myparadissi.com has an idea on their website which involves using a glass ornament to showcase a tiny tree. The holiday season can be hard for all who have lost a baby. Creating a memorial craft can be a therapeutic outlet during this difficult time.



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.



SHARE YOUR STORY OR WRITE A "LOVE LETTER"...

Every single baby has a story and every single story has great meaning for those who take the time to read it or hear it. We welcome submissions from parents, grandparents, siblings, family members, and friends. Many parents find writing to or about their baby very cathartic. Feel free to write a letter to your baby or share your personal story. Your letter or story will impact someone and may offer hope and encouragement. It may make someone else feel less lonely. No writing experience is necessary. Items are welcome in English and in Spanish. You can submit items to us by email or by mail.



Peace by Piece by Stacey Urrutia

A few short months ago, I held the proof copy of my new book, "Making Angels", in my hands. The sense of accomplishment upon completion was akin to giving birth to a baby. Writing the book had been a true labor of love for me. And it was a long, arduous process not unlike our journey to bring children into this world. I recently experienced an unexpected piece of closure in our story, and wanted to share my thoughts with you, as my emotions erupted in a way I never anticipated, and at a time when I thought I was long past feeling so broken hearted.

My husband, Kevin, and I lost our first pregnancy just over 15 years ago, on my 30th birthday. I was 18 weeks pregnant with our first child. As heart wrenching as that was, I remained hopeful that the next pregnancy would

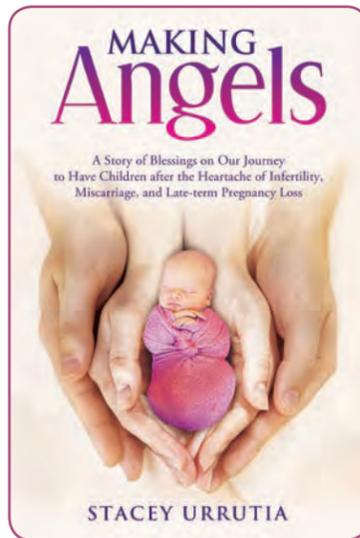
be better. Easier. Successful. To make a long story short, over the course of eight years, we survived the drama of seven pregnancies total, including four additional losses, eventually leading us to have two beautiful, healthy baby boys. Each and every time we experienced a loss, I wound up having tests and procedures done, either to evaluate the viability of the embryo or to surgically remove the fetal tissue that needed to be cleared from my uterus. This meant repeated Northside Hospital visits, most of which carried with them a negative association. The worst of our losses was when I delivered our little girl, Tess, at 22 weeks gestation. She was born alive and passed away in Kevin's arms later that day. She was the last baby I ever tried to carry. The antithesis of that incident was the arrival of our second son, who was delivered to us via our gestational surrogate.

It was amazing and wonderful to see our child being born. The waves of satisfaction and joy and bliss that we finally had another child to call our own overwhelmed me. The love I felt for our new baby and the gratitude I could only hope to express to our surrogate was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. After our son's birth, I was permitted to stay in the postpartum ward like all the other new moms. My time there was filled with all the business that is typical of having a newborn baby. Before I knew it, we were swept away from the ward and released to go home.

Now, at the age of 45, I returned to Northside Hospital to share the newest copies of my book, "Making Angels". I couldn't wait to offer my paperbacks, hot off the presses, to the doctors and nurses who had helped me. And most of all, I was eager to provide extra copies to the H.E.A.R.T.strings Perinatal Bereavement Office. After the loss of Tess, I felt like they were the only ones who understood what we had been through, and comprehended the severity of the devastation her loss brought into our lives.

But here's the weird thing. As I drove closer to the hospital doors, I felt strangely at odds with it. I agonized over these emotions that were piling up within me. This should feel happy, I thought to myself. I had anticipated delivering these books ever since the final draft was produced, hoping to share my story with others in an effort to help them the way I needed help. But that warm, fuzzy feeling I expected was nowhere to be found. It felt awkwardly sad and the anguish brewing up within me poured out into tangible tears.

I pulled through the roundabout and over to the curb,



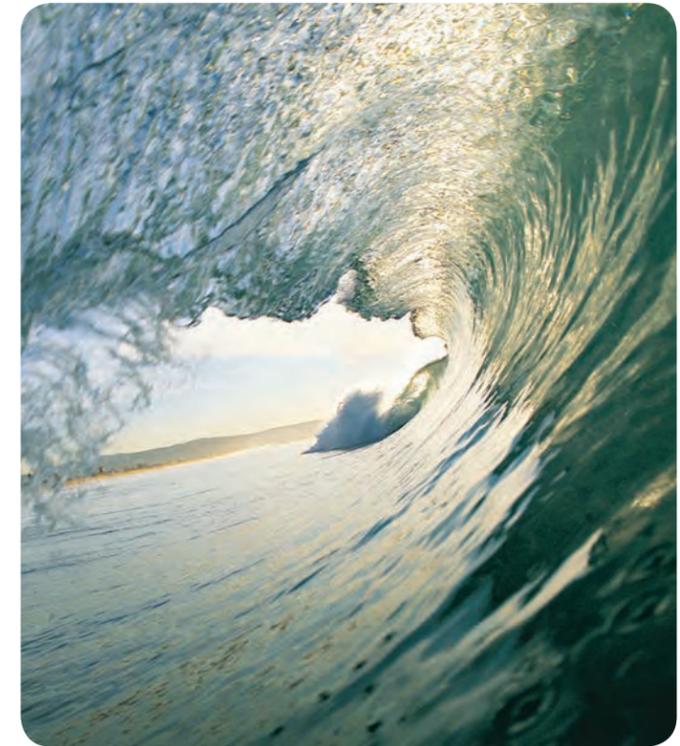
and waited for a moment to exit the car. Aware of the tears tumbling down my cheeks, I remembered how I had been brought to this same location in a wheelchair, my arms absent of the baby girl I expected to bring home. I knew I had to pull it together. This was so embarrassing. I planned to connect with Carol Shutley, a member of the H.E.A.R.T.strings staff whom I'd gotten to know over the phone. Finally I walked into Northside Hospital ready to meet Carol. There couldn't have been a more appropriate person standing before me. After a warm welcome from her I began to get choked up again. I explained that I was surprised to feel so emotional about my visit to Northside Hospital. Thank goodness for Carol, who gently explained

to me that returning to the location where a baby was lost can be very difficult. In speaking with her about it, I realized that Northside Hospital was not only associated with all the pregnancy losses I had, but it was the last place I was able to hold Tess before she died. Even though I had been back to the hospital for the birth of our second son, I hadn't taken the time to grieve then. I was too focused on the needs of our newborn and the concern for our surrogate mother. Because we had moved out of the area, I hadn't been back to Northside Hospital for any other reasons.

Although experiencing this flood of emotions wasn't what I had expected, I have concluded that it was a necessary part of my recovery and healing process. It was the closure I least predicted but was perhaps one of the most important things for me to do. If you have had a pregnancy/baby loss, I recommend investing some time to go back to the place where the loss occurred. Breathe it in. And then walk away. You survived it before, and you'll survive it again. And that, I believe, will make you stronger.

From Jessica Motter - August 26, 2016...

This week my husband and I celebrated our daughter's first birthday. We knew it would be a tough day, so we took the day off work and planned a few things to remember and celebrate our Leah. A friend shared this post with me this week (below). I thought I would share it with you all as well in case it can help others. Like the author of this post, I have lost too many loved ones in my life, parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, and my daughter. The author explains how grief comes in waves and sometimes you see the waves coming and sometimes you don't. I would also add that sometimes its okay to let yourself get caught in the wave. Sometimes we just need to be sad, be happy, and just feel however we want to feel. We knew Leah's birthday would be filled with emotions, but we allowed ourselves to get caught up in it for the day. We celebrated her, we talked about her, we cried for her and we came out stronger because of it.



www.thatericalper.com/2015/08/16/person-is-asking-for-advice-hn-how-to-deal-with-grief-this-reply-is-incredible

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 PNL Office by email northsidepnl@gmail.com or by calling (404) 851-8177.

Making our precious Grace a big sister, our son Andy was born on May 6, 2016 weighing 8lbs, 3oz.

"From the fullness of grace, we have received one blessing after another." John 1:16

With grateful hearts, Fax, Jenny and Mary Heath Reynolds



NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL 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, H.E.A.R.T.strings Perinatal Bereavement 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.

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

RESOURCES 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 www.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, www.thelink.org/house_next_door. Local groups are available, call (770) 730-5858 for more information.

We now have a sibling grief coloring book!

If you would like for us to send you a copy, please call or email us.

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

COME & JOIN US...

Caring & Coping Support Groups

This group is open to parents and grandparents who have lost a baby due to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, and newborn death. There is no charge to attend and reservations are not required. For directions, please go to our website northsidepnl.com & click on the "support groups" tab.

2017 Meeting Dates & Locations All Times Are 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Atlanta Location

Northside Behavioral Health office in the Uncle Julio's shopping center: 1140 Hammond Drive, Building J, Suite 1075, Atlanta 30342

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|------------------|---------------------------|
| • January 9 | • August 14 |
| • February 13 | • September 11 |
| • March 13 | • No October meeting – |
| • April 10 | • join us for the Atlanta |
| • No May Meeting | • Walk to Remember |
| • June 12 | • November 13 |
| • July 10 | • No December meeting |

Forsyth Location

Northside Forsyth Women's Center: 1800 Northside Forsyth Dr., Cumming 30041

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| • January 23 | • August 28 |
| • February 27 | • September 25 |
| • March 27 | • No October meeting – |
| • April 24 | • join us for the Atlanta |
| • No May Meeting | • Walk to Remember |
| • June 26 | • November 27 |
| • July 31 | • No December meeting |

ANEW

This social and support group is 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 monthly in various locations. There is a private Facebook group which has been created by the ANEW parents. If you would like to be added to the Facebook group, email us at northsidepnl@gmail.com. If your loss occurred some time ago, and you are interested in sharing your journey with newer moms, please contact us. For any additional information, just email or call 404-851-8177.

Rainbow PALS (Pregnancy after Loss Support)

A social group especially for parents who are pregnant again after the loss of a baby or are considering a subsequent pregnancy after loss. We meet every 3-4 weeks in a social setting. Our mission is to celebrate these new pregnancies, while offering support for the anxiety, fear, and emotions that are present during pregnancy after loss. For more information, call us at 404-851-8177.

A Time to Heal

A yahoo group especially for parents who have made the painful decision to end a pregnancy due to maternal or fetal complications. This group does not meet in a formal setting, but there is a forum for email support among members who want to join. For more information or to be added to this group, please call us at 404-851-8177.



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 Perinatal Bereavement Endowment Fund Donations:

Monetary Donations

- **In memory of Joseph Michael Kovacik**
- **In memory of Amelia Elisabeth Schmidt**
Thadd and Joanne Buzan
Frank Overdyke
Annette Prather
Kathy Schmidt
Jon and Meridith Ussery
Bethany Welch
Patricia Welch
David Ziegler
Bill Regas
Edwin and Diane Flack
- **In memory of Asher Knox Martindale**
Lindsey Martindale
- **In memory of Eli Bennett Youngblood**
Brooks & Abby Youngblood
- **In memory of Lyla Jane Allen**
Todd and Kim Eldredge
Sheryl Gamel
Tracy Painter
- **In memory of Charlotte Low**
Lashonda Soma
- **In memory of Jacob Chen**
Jing and Richard Chen

Reagan Marie Teddy Bear Fund

- **In memory of Aleina Marie Rico**
- **National Christian Foundation**

Thank You!

Gifts-In-Kind

- **Memory boxes in memory of Mac Leland Barnett**
- **Precious Metal Clay in honor of Lily, Steven and Emily Schuerman**
- **Necklace and Bracelets, Shiona Eisenhauer**
- **Blankets, hats, booties, and quilts from Quilts for Kids, Georgia Chapter**
- **Blankets, hats, wraps, and angel necklaces from Alma Harshe**
- **Clothes, stuffed animals and memory boxes in honor of Makenzie, Chandria Conaway**
- **Memory boxes and a blanket in memory of Grace Emily Palmieri by Aunt Marianne, Uncle Brian, and cousins Caroline and Bobby**
- **Bridget's Cradles – knitted and crocheted cradles**
- **Activities for siblings in memory of Alya McLaughlin by her siblings and parents**
- **Precious metal clay from Emily and Steve Schuerman in memory of Lily Pope Schuerman**

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 northsidepn.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
- Decorated memory boxes
- 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