

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.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Loss is very difficult. The loss of a much wanted baby is one of the worst things a parent can experience. However, as parents often ask “Why me?”, “Why my baby?”, the search for meaning comes. Each baby has its own unique story and its own unique place in a family. Once the initial shock and pain settle, it is these stories that inspire parents and others to do better, to give back, to lend a shoulder to cry on, to support someone else who needs supporting, and to become a part of the perinatal loss community.

Every single baby impacts not only his or her parents, but also the doctors and nurses who care for that family. Recently, one of our own Labor and Delivery nurses, Tina Amodeo, was inspired by the story of the elephant community and touched by the way that elephants support each other after the loss of an elephant baby. She used her inspiration and her talent of pottery to make the H.E.A.R.T.strings office a beautiful gift. During the time that she was making this wonderful gift, she was able to share the elephant story to curious members of her pottery class.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Tina Amodeo
Labor & Delivery Nurse



What Inspires You...

In her words, “I was inspired to make this elephant in my pottery class because of the work of the Perinatal Loss/Heartstrings department. I’ve read the story about the elephants and about the herd and the love of elephants for each other in their herd. I wanted to show my appreciation to this group of women for everything they do every day to help women who have suffered losses so horrible that only a herd of people could help them heal from. My best friend Renata Frank lost her son in July of 2016 and it truly took a herd to help her through her tremendous grief. I’m so touched and inspired by these women, their love of people, and their strength during the darkest times in people’s lives, and their smiles that can heal even the biggest broken hearts. I’m blessed to know and work among these women and so proud to be a part of their herd.”

We are so thankful for this lovely gift. It is a silent and mighty reminder of the inspiration we see each and every day in this work that we do. We see it in the families we meet and the staff that we serve.

Thank you to each of our families for inspiring us daily to be better caregivers and thank you, Tina, for sharing your gift with us.

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

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

At the 2017 Atlanta Walk to Remember, we created a custom keepsake, which families could purchase as a way to support future Walks. It was a beautiful river rock, carved and hand-painted with our event logo of the elephant and butterfly. Families who purchased one are using these stones in different ways. We are honored to share the following blog post from A Mourning Mom, which teaches us about the Jewish tradition of leaving stones at grave sites. For more information visit <http://www.inspirationstones.com/>

The Story of the Stones

March 28, 2012 at 10:48 p.m.

Amourningmom.com

By Lanie Taylor Pontz

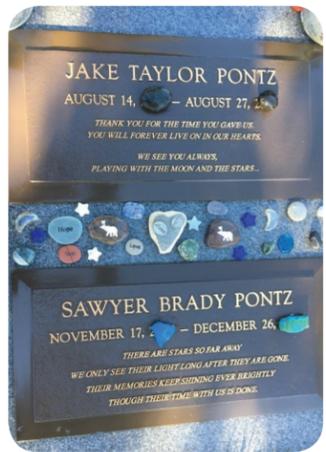
You may have noticed in my last post that Jake and Sawyer’s headstone is covered with stones. At the unveiling, Jake and Sawyer’s sister carefully arranged all of the stones. In fact, the twins each painted rocks for the occasion. She would only paint the smooth stones. He would only paint the rough ones.

The tradition of leaving rocks on the headstone signifies that someone has visited which honors the deceased person’s memory. The last scene of Schindler’s List depicts children of Survivors placing stones on Oscar Schindler’s grave.



There are many theories on the origins of this custom. A few are the following:

1. The stones are a kind of calling card left for the deceased. Stones, unlike flowers, are permanent and do not get blown away in the wind.
2. Jacob’s sons took a stone and put it on Rachel’s (their mother’s) grave to make up Rachel’s tomb. In placing stones on the grave one participates in building the tombstone.
3. A large stone slab was placed on the grave so that it would not be lost. Rabbi Tam, goes on to explain that there were smaller stones that were set under the sides of the large stone that rests on them so that it will not bear down too heavily on the deceased.
4. The ritual of placing a stone is a way of expressing our emotions and spiritual needs. Rabbi Andrew Straus explains that “we need physical acts to express these things for us, to make them concrete.”



Placing a stone on a grave does just that. It works in several ways:

1. It is a sign to others who come to the grave when I am not there that they and I are not the only ones who remember. The stones I see on the grave when I come are a reminder to me that others have come to visit the grave. My loved one is remembered by many others and his/her life continues to have an impact on others, even if I do not see them.
2. When I pick up the stone it sends a message to me. I can still feel my loved one. I can still touch and be touched by him/her. I can still feel the impact that has been made on my life. Their life, love, teachings, values, and morals still make an impression on me. When I put the stone down, it is a reminder to me that I can no longer take this person with me physically. I can only take him/her with me in my heart and my mind and the actions I do because he/she taught me to do them. Their values, morals, ideals live on and continue to impress me – just as the stone has made an impression on my hands – so too their life has made an impression on me that continues. - Rabbi Tom Louchheim

I am sure there are more theories but no matter the origins, I like the tradition. Evan and I collect stones from places we go. We have our own tradition of kissing the rocks before we place them on the headstone. We are sending kisses to Jake and Sawyer. I hope that they are getting them.

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

DO NOT CONFUSE MY BAD DAYS AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. THOSE ARE ACTUALLY THE DAYS I AM FIGHTING HARDEST.

Author Unknown

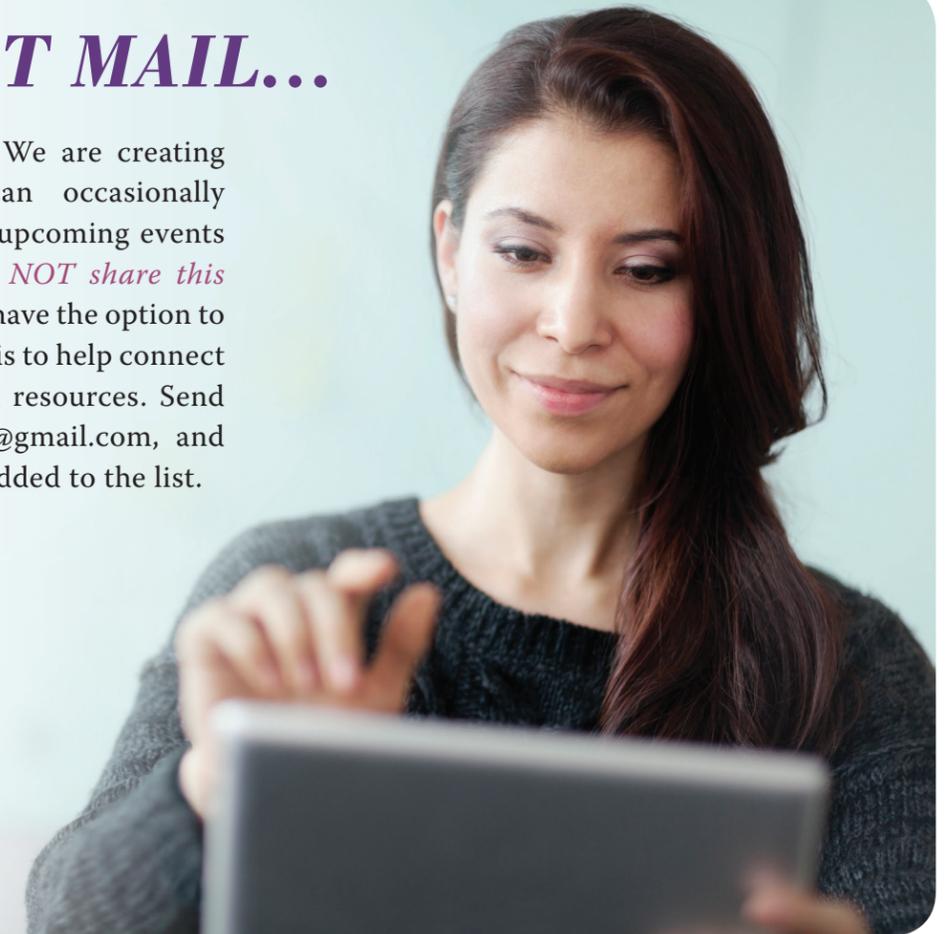


When a mother elephant loses her baby, they stand in a circle around her and allow her all the time she needs to grieve and mourn. They don't hurry her along, or push her to abandon the body. They stand in a circle and gently touch her with their trunks, a silent show of unwavering support. Elephant mothers will stand with their babies for weeks, not eating or drinking, just holding them close and letting the reality that they are gone slowly settle in. And they are allowed that time by their family members.

- Author Unknown

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.



NEW YEAR NEW GRIEF

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stillstandingmag.com/2018/01/new-year-new-grief-2

Nathalie Himmelrich is the author of a number of resource books for bereaved parents. As a relationship coach, grief recovery expert and bereaved mother herself she believes that relationships (intimate and to other support people) are the foundation for a healthy grieving experience. She is also the founder of the Grieving Parents Support (GPS) Network and the May We All Heal peer support group.

Looking forward or backward?

New Year's intentions are all around at this time of the year. For many of us bereaved parents, the holidays and New Year's celebrations with its 'merry' and 'happy' wishes can lead us to slide down and get lost in another grief rabbit-hole. We are left with the sentiment that nothing that the New Year brings can make the feelings of loss any better.

Surviving the Holidays

The good news:

Welcome on the other side. Take a breath. You survived the holidays.

As much as I love part of the holiday spirit, I often encounter myself in a quiet, unsociable mood and end up spending – at least some part of it – by myself. This is how I re-energize and re-calibrate for whatever newness might come with the New Year.



Setting Intentions

For the New Year, I asked the community of the Grieving Parents Support Network to share their intentions, relating to their grief. Here is what they said:

- I spent the last year encumbered by grief, but unable to process. The loss of one twin and the survival of another have kept me in a state of limbo between that grief and the happiness being a first-time mom evokes. I have felt guilty for enjoying certain moments without Benji, just as much as I have felt guilty not enjoying others with his brother. My intention for 2018 is to process and get to a point where that guilt isn't there, in either direction.
- I am creating a bucket list, it reiterates the last line of the poem "to live in a way that would make you proud" in memory of Sam 7/5/2015.
- I promise to hold onto hope even when I feel blind.
- My New Year's intentions are to keep Charlotte's memory alive, to celebrate her birthday (15) and the day she gained her wings (28), to share pictures and videos of her that people haven't seen on the 15th and 28th of each month, and to organize something for friends and family to participate in to remember Baby Charlotte.

Or it can be as simple as: "I intend to take one day at a time."

Intentions don't have to be hard and fast rules or goals as you would set them in a business plan. Whatever your intentions are, think about them as guiding principles that will lead you through the year.

Let's Review

Grieving in healthy ways, for me, means not to look for ways 'to get over it' or 'through it' as a way to get it done. It is about finding ways to be curious about what is stirring in my heart. Integrating not just the memory, but my ever-unfolding experience into my life. In this light, dear healthy grieved, here some Year 2017 Review Questions for you:

1. What have you learned about yourself and grief/grieving?
2. What has changed since the loss of your child? Hint: make it specific. Look both for negative and positive things (for example I no longer take life for granted.)
3. What are you ready to let go?
4. How do you want to be with your grief in the New Year?

Looking Forward

What do you want to bring forward into this New Year?

Setting an intention can be powerful. Author Lynn McTaggart* has found that for something to occur it is 300,000 times more likely when one has set an intention.

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 mentoring 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

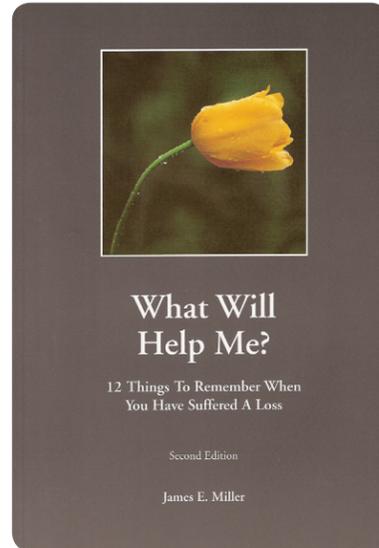
We want to hear from you.....let us know what books or websites are helpful to you. We will highlight a new book or two each newsletter.

This quarter's book selection is:

“What Will Help Me? 12 Things To Remember When You Have Suffered A Loss/How Can I Help? 12 Things To Do When Someone You Know Suffers A Loss.”

by James E. Miller.

This book is actually two books in one. Held one way, it is a book for those who are grieving, with 12 chapters on healing. Held the other way, it is a book for the support person on how to help someone who is grieving, offering practical and helpful advice.



BE STILL

Nicholas Evans

“Be still.

Close your eyes.

Breathe.

Listen for my footfall
in your heart.

I am not gone but merely
walk within you.”

Source: www.irisremembers.com



SUPPORT GROUP RESOURCES

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.

ANEW

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. 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, please contact us.

Rainbow PALS (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. There is a private Facebook page for this group. Please contact us to be added.

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. This group communicates through a private Facebook group. For more information or to be added to this group, please contact us.

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 (northsidepn@gmail.com) or by calling 404-851-8177.

Denise and Steve Atkinson would like to announce the birth of their rainbow baby, Henry Cook Atkinson. He was born April 5, 2017. He was 8 pounds zero ounces and 20 inches long. His big sister, Natalie Grace Atkinson, lived here on earth from March 26, 2015 to March 30, 2015. (She had trisomy 18). His other big sister Corinne, age 6, and his big brother Mark, age 4, enjoy helping to take care of him at home.

- Denise and Steve Atkinson

After losing our beautiful Lyla Jane last July, we are so pleased to announce the arrival of her little brother, Knox Porter. He has brought so much joy and healing to our hearts. Hold onto hope, your rainbow is coming!

- Kyle & Heather Allen

We are overjoyed to announce the birth of our rainbow baby Violet Joy Hostetter, born on Leap Day, February 29th, 2016. She is little sister to 7-year-old Sienna Grace and our beloved angel baby Savannah Lee who we lost when we were 33 weeks pregnant to a cord accident in March 2015. We called our angel "our little daffodil" because the daffodils were in full bloom at the time. I wanted our rainbow baby to have a name that honored Savannah, but recognized how incredibly unique and special our sweet little girl was to our family. We named her Violet, for the February flower and because it is the last color of a rainbow, and "Joy" because she gave us such happiness when she was born to help heal our broken heart. I pray for all the mothers and fathers who have angel babies, and take comfort in the fact that you are not alone in your grief journey. May God bless you all and your sweet babies. - Julie & Carson Hostetter

Introducing Hudson Matthew Horsman, born November 11, 2017 at 5:54pm weighing 8 pounds 1 ounces and 20 1/4 inches long. We know our sweet rainbow baby was sent to us by his sibling in heaven and he arrived a week and a half early on his mama's birthday. It was the best birthday a mom could ask for. God always makes a rainbow shine after a storm and we are in love with our precious rainbow baby.

- Ellen & Matt Horsman



Henry Cook Atkinson



Knox Porter Allen



Violet Joy Hostetter



Hudson Matthew Horsman

RAINBOW P.A.L.S. PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH THE NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL ATLANTA AUXILIARY

On October 10th, the Northside Hospital Atlanta Auxiliary voted to fully fund a special support program offered by the H.E.A.R.T.strings Perinatal Bereavement Office of Northside Hospital. The H.E.A.R.T.strings office serves over 370 families per year who are experiencing the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. Many of these families return to Northside when they are expecting a subsequent pregnancy after their loss. These special babies are referred to as "Rainbow Babies" in the perinatal loss community. Experiencing a perinatal loss is sometimes compared to surviving a storm. The grief comes in waves. The rainbow is the hope that comes after the storm of loss.

The Rainbow P.A.L.S. (Pregnancy After Loss Support) program began a few years ago, with a private online forum for daily support and periodic group gatherings. The group has grown to over 60 members. Last year, the H.E.A.R.T.strings office introduced the "Rainbow Package", which consists of a special Rainbow Baby onesie, a handmade hat, a book, rainbow magnet for their door, and a meditation CD. With the support and funding from the Northside Hospital Atlanta Auxiliary, we will now be able to provide Rainbow Packages for any family in our perinatal loss community who requests one. For families who have survived the storm and are hanging on to the hope of meeting their precious rainbow baby, these packages give them something to focus on during their pregnancy—a reminder not only that they are carrying someone extra special, but also that Northside Hospital remembers what they have been through.

If you would like more information about joining the online support forum or would like to request a Rainbow Package, please call or email us.



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:

Gifts-In-Kind

- Handmade blankets from Florence Dukes
- Handmade hats from Brandy Davison in memory of Nicole Jean Cunningham
- Decorated memory boxes from Lindsey Martindale in memory of Asher Knox Martindale
- Memory boxes from Judi Armstrong
- Micropremie clothing in memory of Emma Eilayah Stifel from Julie and Brian Stifel
- Camera donated in memory of Alyssa Lee Vaughan from Amy Vaughan and family

Reagan Marie Teddy Bear Fund

- In memory of William Roy Gaddy
Francie Disco
- William Martin
- In memory of Joseph, Patrick & Frances Murphy
Shayne & Rachel Murphy
- In memory of Hudson Warren Smith
Dollene Quinn

Atlanta Walk to Remember Fund

- Susan Taylor
- Jerry Hendrix

Monetary Donations

- In memory of Lyla Jane Allen
Sue Herries
- In memory of Lexi, Abby, Morgan & Baby Billeter
- In memory of Michael Robert Bowers on his first birthday
The Metzger family
The Goddesses
Sarah Brockett
- In memory of Harrison Bryan Brinson
Staci Brinson
Catherine Bruce
- In memory of Vivian Katherine Byrd
Kristoff, Kelly, Ava and Liam Byrd
- In memory of Alayna Dean Cohen
Allison Cohen
Diane Coleman
- In memory of Raelynn Brooke Foster
Diana Amarra
Stephen & Marge Hoppe
Gina Johnson
Ellen Foster

- In memory of William Roy Gaddy
Francie Disco
- In memory of Hunter Eric Hansotia
Phiroze and Marilyn Hansotia
- In memory of Asher August Hendrix
Kathy & Bill Russo
- In memory of Molly Claire Hines
Loren & Joanne Hartman
Garland & Gayle Hines
- In subort of the Hubbard family
Martha Holden
Carissa Atkins
Jill Kosmal
Laura Templeton
- In memory of Andrew James Jarrett
Jessica Wolff
Fran Roetman
Deborah Bursa
- In memory of Matthew Daniel Kennedy
Timothy Kennedy
Christel Kennedy

Monetary Donations

- In memory of Matthew McLaren Morrison
Kathleen Morrison
Katie Spencer
- In memory of Grady Scott Mullennix
Chris Mullennix
- Sharmeen Patil
- Jayme Peterson
- Kathy Ransdell
- Stephanie Ransdell
- In memory of Rebecca Joy Rhodenbaugh
Pat Lopina
The Andrew George family
Kurt Dyck
Mandy Baskwell
The Steele family
Amy Norris
Joshua Wang
Matt Rodgers
Paul Baskwell
Lynette Gildermaster
The OBF group of Kevin & Debbie Anderson,
Marty & Lisa Creech and Dave & Terry Smetana
Clarence Lau
Pam Humphrey
- In memory of Theodore Riddick
Debi Shendelman
- In memory of Amelia Elisabeth Schmidt
Patricia Welch
- In memory of Taylor Olivia Shank
Fatima Young
- In memory of Baby Shums
Mark and Michelle Blanchard
- In memory of Hudson Warren Smith
Dollene Quinn
- In memory of Eli Stukalsky
Hillary Levy
- In memory of Baby Wheeler
Rita deFrank
- Trena Wilger
- Shea Williams Seele
- In memory of Caleb Winn
Emily Winn
- In memory of Rosemary Bowen Yeager
Tim & Sherry Ungashick
Lisa Carroll
Brandi Gregory
Stephen Childress
Brittany Dean
Stacey Gallagher
John & Ruth Rucker
Melissa Snow
David and Debra Giet
Bonnie Moneyhan
Randy McDonald
Kathy Hancock
Nathan Klose
Andrea Smith
Joe & Emily Stevenson
Sue Painter
Shannon Burgin
Ethel & Jim Childresd
Michelle Wiley
Shea Williams Seele
Judith Grzybowski
Rebecca Dusterdieck
Lillian Grzybowski
Shelly (Waltz) Campbell
Emily Villar
Linda Lotz
Rhonda Millhollin
Billy Crawford
Shaughn Uihlein
Brooke Skelton
Susan Taylor
Rick and Lyn Hamilton
Beth Todd
Cari Santillan
Mary Madden
Denise Buckelew
Chris Rucker
McDonald Family
The Post House, LLC
Willard Yeager
Patricia Busby Mims

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