

Helping Families Through Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Loss

Arabic عرب

Burmese

English

Farsi

French

Karen

Kurdish

Mandarin

Pashto پښتو

Spanish

Ukrainian

Vietnamese



CATHOLIC
SOCIAL SERVICES
OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

*Project in memory of
Imogen Rose Patrick*

About this project

After losing our daughter, Imogen, in November 2020, we decided to create a resource guide for refugee and immigrant families. As you read our perspective as Christian parents, please know that all of the resources in this handout are available to you regardless of your faith practice. We only seek to share our experience with you in this way, to express our sorrow and compassion for your loss, and our hope that someday you will see your little one once again.

IN MEMORY OF IMOGEN ROSE PATRICK November 7, 2020

There can be nothing more excruciatingly contradictory to a Christian than the death of a child. Nothing can be a more brutally cold reminder of the pain that resides in this world, and the beauty that sits beside it. We who are still here afterward are flooded with pain and grief at the loss of innocent life, while our faith tells us that those innocent lost would be confused by our tears as they dance and bathe in the beatific vision, holding the hands of Christ, never once having to wonder and worry through life if they would ever get there.

The role of a Christian parent is to ensure that his or her children make it to heaven. Maybe it is the gift of these babies lost early to relieve us of that duty. They've made it, and don't need us watching out for them anymore.

It is truly a gift. The birth of a child is a gift. It is a miracle. Their little bodies remind us of how perfect some things on earth can be, but their loss reminds us that there is no "perfect" here, and we can only hope to find that later. It is a gift from God that He could present us with a human life to hold and raise and ensure we get them to Heaven. If they leave us so incredibly soon, it's instead their gift to us when we need it, to say "You don't need to worry about me. Please make sure you do what you need to so that you can get here too. Live in a way that you know you'll see me again. If not for yourself, do it for me. I wish you understood how silly it is to grieve and weep. You looked at my little body and called it 'perfect,' but you have no idea what that word means. I'll tell you all about it when you get here.

Ryan & Katie Patrick



Our mission at Connected Forever is to support families who have experienced premature birth or infant loss by providing resources, education and emotional support.

- Forever Mamas - Meets quarterly and is a place for bereaved parents to provide support and build meaningful connections
- Forever Mamas Facebook Group - Private facebook group for every mom who has experienced pregnancy or infant loss. This is an open forum for moms to support one another and offer guidance along the loss journey.
- Parent Connect - Connected Forever has peer mentors to support your every step of the way. The peer mentor will provide individual support, resources, and hope.
- Bereavement Packages - Created specifically for a grieving family, they include jewelry charms to hold close to your heart, forget me not seeds to plant in remembrance and a quote card to bring comfort.
- Funeral and Burial Assistance - We provide financial assistance for the funeral, burial, and headstone for the babies. The application can be found at www.connected4ever.org
- Memorial Events - Memorial events that allow parents to spend time remembering their angel.
- Cuddle Cots - Connected Forever has donated several Cuddle Cots to hospitals across Nebraska. These allow families to spend every special moment with their baby where every minute counts.

Connected4ever.org

Tracy Pella tarcy-pella@conncted4ever.org

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Our mission is to provide comprehensive perinatal support to mothers, fathers, and families who are affected by pregnancy or infant loss.

- Doula support for pregnant mothers whose babies have been given a poor diagnosis or who have unexpectedly found out their baby is no longer living.
- Spectra Breast Pump rental and consultation with a certified lactation consultant, whether the mother's goal is to pump for comfort while her supply dries up or to donate breast milk.
- Guidance on funeral arrangements or memorial services
- Care packages comprised of grief materials specific to the type of loss and makeup of the family unit
- Weighted memory bears made from onesies, blankets, or other sentimental material and weighted to the birth weight of the baby, offering relief to the bereaved mother's aching arms or chest
- Custom swaddles to provide even the smallest babies with clothing and dignity
- Translation services to mothers, fathers, and families whose first language is Spanish
- Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) grief support groups and retreats
- Financial assistance for burial and funeral arrangements
- Financial assistance for mental health therapy with a licensed provider
- Referrals to other applicable community resources
- Various celebration and memorial events throughout the year

Contact us at
www.nofootprinttoosmall.com



EMBRACE AT CHI HEALTH ST. ELIZABETH

Perinatal Palliative Care & Hospice Program

Every Moment Brief, Remembered Always, Cherished Eternally

The CHI Health St. Elizabeth EMBRACE program is a support system for families who are facing the knowledge that their unborn baby has a life-limiting diagnosis. The EMBRACE team consists of doctors, nurses, social workers, and pastoral care ministers who strive to address the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of the family when they receive this life-changing information.

We recognize that every moment a family spends with their baby is precious. We desire to create a sacred and safe environment where a family can give birth and honor the life of their child even though the time may be brief.

We Provide Care by Offering...

- One-on-one support for families to assist with creating individualized birth plans
- Resource materials to support families throughout their pregnancy and following birth
- The opportunity to meet with care providers to discuss medical interventions that families may desire following the birth of their baby
- Spiritual support through Pastoral Care and Ministers within the community
- Private tours of the Advanced Baby Center and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- The creation of baby photographs and keepsakes for families
- Ongoing follow-up and support for family and friends

If you would like more information about the St. Elizabeth EMBRACE program, we would be honored to visit with you.

EMBRACE Coordinator

CHI Health St. Elizabeth

555 South 70th Street - Lincoln, NE 68510

402-219-7065



BRIDGES - CHI HEALTH ST. ELIZABETH
Bereavement, Resources, Infant Loss, Death, Grief,
Encouragement and Support

The CHI Health St. Elizabeth BRIDGES Program is a bereavement support system for families who experience a pregnancy loss through miscarriage, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, stillbirth, or newborn death.

We believe that mourning the loss of a baby (no matter what the gestational age) is difficult but important work. Our mission is to provide sensitive care, information about grief, and empathetic support and encouragement on a one-on-one basis.

Our BRIDGES program includes:

- A BRIDGES packet containing resource materials on grief given to families experiencing a loss
- Ongoing grief support through follow-up phone calls and/or written notes during the first year
- As many mementos of the baby as possible, created by the nursing staff and given to the parents at no cost
- Information provided about available community outreach resources & professional counseling support
- Palliative care pre-birth counseling for families of babies with a potential life-limiting diagnosis
- Continuing education for health care providers who care for families experiencing pregnancy loss
- Hospital burial option at Calvary Cemetery for those who have experienced a miscarriage at home or in the emergency department
- Annual events to honor babies who have died through miscarriage, stillbirth, or newborn death:
 - Spring candle-lighting gathering at St. Elizabeth
 - Citywide “Walk to Remember” the first Sunday in October
 - Mass at Calvary Cemetery in April & October in honor of babies laid to rest at hospital burial



BRYAN'S BUTTERFLY MEMORIES TEAM
Bereavement, Resources, Infant Loss, Death, Grief,
Encouragement and Support

We're Here for You and Your Family

Bryan's Butterfly Memories team of health care professionals offers support, comfort, and information to patients and families who are facing the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition of their unborn baby.

Bryan's Butterfly Memories team includes your own doctor, neonatal specialist doctors, nurses, social workers and pastoral care. Our goal is to support you and your family as you make decisions about the care of your unborn baby or newborn, with full respect for your personal values, beliefs, and traditions.

Our team of caring professionals can:

- Help meet the individual physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of you and your family.
- Offer step-by-step support in planning for delivery and aftercare.
- Support you and your family in creating lasting memories of your child.
- Provide private tours of Bryan's labor and delivery and neonatal care areas.
- Offer ongoing personalized support and connections to helpful community resources

If you would like more information,
please contact the Butterfly Memories
team at 402-481-8011 or
ButterflyMemories@bryanhealth.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHAT IS MISCARRIAGE?

Miscarriage or early pregnancy loss is when a baby dies in the womb (uterus) before 20 weeks of pregnancy. Most miscarriages happen in the first trimester before the 12th week of pregnancy. Some women have a miscarriage before they know they're pregnant. We don't know all the causes of miscarriage. There may be problems in the chromosomes, uterus or cervix or infections. It can take a few weeks to a month or more for your body to recover from a miscarriage. It may take longer to recover emotionally. Talk to your health care provider about having medical tests before you try to get pregnant again. Most women who miscarry go on to have a healthy pregnancy later.

WHAT IS STILLBIRTH?

Stillbirth is when a baby dies in the womb after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Most stillbirths happen before a pregnant person goes into labor, but a small number happen during labor and birth. Stillbirth affects about 1 in 160 pregnancies each year in the United States. Stillbirth can happen in any family. We don't always know why stillbirth affects certain families more than others. Common causes include infections, birth defects and pregnancy complications, like preeclampsia. Talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do, to help reduce your risk factors for stillbirth. Most people who have a stillbirth and get pregnant again have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

WHAT IS INFANT LOSS?

Infant mortality is the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. The five leading causes of infant death in the United States are birth defects, preterm birth, sudden infant death syndrome, injuries such as suffocation, or maternal pregnancy complications.

DEALING WITH GRIEF AFTER THE DEATH OF YOUR BABY

Grief is all the feelings you have when someone close to you dies. You may have a lot of feelings as you grieve. You may feel angry, sad and confused. You and your partner may show your feelings differently. You and your family can get help as you grieve from your provider, a social worker, a grief counselor or a support group. Take care of yourself to help you heal. Your body and your emotions need time to recover after pregnancy. Find special ways for you and your family to remember your baby.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is all the feelings you have when someone close to you dies. You may find it hard to believe that your baby died. You may want to shout or scream or cry. You may want to blame someone. Or you may want to hide under the covers and never come out. At times, your feelings may seem more than you can handle. You may feel sad, depressed, angry or guilty. You may get sick easily with colds and stomach aches and have trouble concentrating. All of these are part of grief.

When your baby dies from miscarriage, stillbirth or at or after birth, your hope of being a parent dies, too. The dreams you had of holding your baby and watching him grow are gone. So much of what you wanted and planned for are lost. This can leave a large, empty space inside you. It may take a long time to heal this space.

The death of a baby is one of the most painful things that can happen to a family. You may never really get over your baby's death. But you can move through your grief to healing. As time passes, your pain eases. You can make a place in your heart and mind for the memories of your baby. You may grieve for your baby for a long time, maybe even your whole life. There's no right amount of time to grieve. It takes as long as it takes for you. Over time, you can find peace and become ready to think about the future.

HOW DO MEN AND WOMEN GRIEVE?

Everyone grieves in his own way. Men and women often show grief in different ways. Even if you and your partner agree on lots of things, you may feel and show your grief differently. Different ways of dealing with grief may cause problems for you and your partner. For example, you may think your partner isn't as upset about your baby's death as you are. You may think he doesn't care as much. This may make you angry. At the same time, your partner may feel that you're too emotional. He may not want to hear about your feelings so often, and he may think you'll never get over your grief. He also may feel left out of all the support you're getting.

Everyone may ask him how you're doing but forget to ask how he's doing. You have a special bond with your baby during pregnancy. Your baby is very real to you. You may feel a strong attachment to your baby. Your partner may not feel as close to your baby during pregnancy. He doesn't carry the baby in his body, so the baby may seem less real to him. He may become more attached to the baby later in pregnancy when he feels the baby kick or sees the baby on an ultrasound. Your partner may be more attached to your baby if she dies after birth.

In general, here's how you may show your grief: You may want to talk about the death of your baby often and with many people. You may show your feelings more often. You may cry or get angry a lot. You may be more likely to ask your partner, family or friends for help. Or you may go to your place of worship or to a support group.

In general, here's how your partner may show his grief: He may grieve by himself. He may not want to talk about his loss. He may spend more time at work or do things away from home to keep his mind off the loss. He may feel like he's supposed to be strong and tough and protect his family. He may not know how to show his feelings. He may think that talking about his feelings makes him seem weak. He may try to work through his grief on his own rather than ask for help. Showing grief doesn't have any rules or instructions. Men and women often may show grief in these ways. But there's really no right or wrong way for you or your partner to grieve or share your feelings. It's OK to show your pain and grief in different ways. Be patient and caring with each other. Try to talk about your thoughts and feelings and how you want to remember your baby.

Perinatal and Infant Loss Resource Guide

Healing Hearts

Lincolndiocese.org/bereavement-healing/healing-hearts-grief-outreach
Healing Hearts Grief Outreach Program has provided support for Catholics who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Each year, the Mass of the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28) is offered for parents who have lost an infant.

HoriSun Hospice

Horisunhospice.com

We offer six-week support group sessions held in the spring and fall.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center

Immaculateheartcounseling.org

A staff of Licensed Psychologists and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners strives to meet the needs of our community through a wide range of counseling services, including individual, family/child, marital, group, crisis pregnancy, and post-abortion counseling.

Journey Through Living, LLC

Journeythroughliving.com

Couch Conversations are small group seminars involving you and your support system. Individual consultations are available to enhance capacity for personal and social functioning, assisting with personal adjustment to crisis and transition and education about creating and sustaining personal change. Workshop presentations are available to large groups of people.

Mourning Hope Grief Center

Hope@mourninghope.org

Offers a variety of small sessions specific to your loss, including sibling workshops and support groups throughout the year. Mourning Hope also has a lending library for grief related topics.

Roper and Sons Outreach Grief Services

We offer a six-week grief course offered four times a year in Lincoln.

CERTIFICATES

If your baby is less than 20 weeks gestation: A certificate of non-viable birth can be requested through the the Department of Health and Human Services at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/vital-records.aspx>

If your baby is more than 20 weeks gestation: the hospital staff in collaboration with funeral home will submit a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth or birth certificate and death certificate.