



Pathways

Support for child, infant and pregnancy loss

Volume 8, Issue 2

From Regina's Desk

My favorite yellow chair, an open window, a cool morning breeze, a fresh cup of java and the sweet, sweet blessing of home.

In a small town, typical summer morning sounds include children laughing, a dog barking and occasional traffic.

This morning, the open window brought sounds of a school bus stopping and starting, picking up neighborhood children for the first day of school.

With that came the bittersweet realization that we should have been putting our little Sadie Rose on the bus for her first day of kindergarten.

The yellow chair is soon wet with salty tears, the breeze an agent of pain as it carries the sounds of children and buses and the coffee leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

There are reminders every day of our little Sadie—some bring smiles, some bring tears. New births, funerals, birthdays, holidays, laughter, school buses, sights, sounds, touch or smells—bereaved parents carry their deceased children in their hearts and are constantly confronted with “triggers” that open to love, smiles, tears, pain and the musings of “what/who would they be now.”

I have spent time with mothers this month who are reeling with the sudden loss of their sons who were in their 50s and 60s. I have also talked with mothers who have known their children only by the positive sign on the pregnancy test or by the sound of the heartbeat on the ultrasound machine. Each mother teaches me anew, the validity and heartache of a parent outliving their child.

This month, we hear from a mother whose first pregnancy ended in miscarriage. Her story, “Grieving a Heartbeat,” (see below) captures a glimpse of the loneliness that often envelopes mothers who have experienced miscarriage. Statistics show many women suffer loss by miscarriage, yet few feel freedom to talk about it.

It is our hope that anyone who has experienced the loss of a child will find our groups, ceremonies, chats and personal support a place to freely share about their experiences... because the path of grief after losing a child should never be walked alone.

Regina Harlow
Executive Director

Miss our last newsletter? All our newsletters can be viewed on our website or you may contact our office for a hard copy.

Quote Corner

It's so curious: one can resist tears and 'behave' very well in the hardest hours of grief. But then someone makes you a friendly sign behind a window, or one notices that a flower that was in bud only yesterday has suddenly blossomed, or a letter slips from a drawer... everything collapses.

~Colette

Grieving a heartbeat: a mother's loss by miscarriage

By Amanda Siler

I remember it like it was yesterday. I can recall every detail of the first and last moment I heard his heartbeat. I sat in the dark, cool ultrasound room. Tears of joy and relief flooded my face as we heard the heartbeat through the machine and watched his heart pump on the screen. A heartbeat means a healthy pregnancy, right? I remember asking if 100 beats per minute was a good heart rate. The answer was,

“It is a little low, but it is still early. Once you hear the heartbeat, the chance of a miscarriage is 5 percent.”

Those odds seemed good enough for me. I was elated, yet something kept telling me this is too good to be true.

Less than a week later, my life changed forever. As my husband and I entered the ultrasound room for the third time in a week, I

Inside

- *Miscarriage facts*
- *How to support someone who has experienced miscarriage*
- *Monthly coffee and support meeting dates*
- *Upcoming ceremonies*
- *Candlelight ceremony submission information*

See Heartbeat, Page 2

‘That feeling in my chest was my heart slowly breaking...’

Heartbeat, from Page 1

knew this time we were not going to get news of relief, yet I remained hopeful. I was so scared that I was losing my precious heartbeat, my baby. I was so scared that I am not even sure how to put it into words, how to describe the feeling in my chest. Little did I know that the awful feeling was my heart slowly breaking. I would endure that feeling for months.

The ultrasound screen came on. We heard my baby’s heartbeat again. I was relieved, but quickly became skeptical when I looked at the technician’s face. I distinctly remember asking her, “What is the rate?” She wouldn’t answer me. She said, “The heart rate is low, very low.” I asked her again, “What is the rate?” was not prepared for her answer. She replied, “60 bpm.”

I instantly began to sob and begged the staff to give me medicine or something that would save my baby. I begged for anything to get his heart rate back up. My thoughts went to dark places and they went there fast. I sobbed to my husband how sorry I was. I thought it was my fault. I thought it was something I did or didn’t do. I suppose that is the natural instinct of a mother.

I left the ultrasound room that day dizzy with grief. The hallway was blurry from tears, sheer shock and distress. I just heard my baby’s heartbeat. How could they send me home telling me that I was not going to give birth to this baby? How could they send me home after telling me I am losing the baby? What am I supposed to do now? It didn’t make sense. My baby was alive. We just heard the heartbeat.

The minutes and hours that passed were so devastating. Days, weeks, and months went by and I was still so buried in my grief that I became a different person. There are people in my life today that still do not understand why I was in such a state

of mourning. To many, I did not lose a baby. I heard the following comments: “You will get pregnant again.” “There was something probably wrong with the baby.” “It is nature’s way.” “At least you didn’t carry the baby to term.” “Why are you so angry?” “Just be thankful you didn’t feel it kick yet.” “At least you lost it early.” First of all, referring to my baby with the amazing little heartbeat as an “it” bothers me to this day. How can something with a heartbeat be called an “it”?

I have had time to realize that everyone grieves differently and everyone views a miscarriage differently. Not everyone knows what to say and how to say it. Only my husband and I were able to hear the heartbeat of our precious baby and plan for his future. I now understand that our family and friends may not be able to view that pregnancy the same way I did. It is hard for some to grieve a baby that in their minds didn’t exist.

I spent the following months, and still do to this day, trying to convince others how real and alive my baby was. It can be an uphill battle. Some may never get it and I had to realize that is okay, too. God put people in my life that would understand.

November 24, 2010 was the last time I heard my baby’s heartbeat. I felt others were saying behind my back, “She should be over it by now, “or “It was just a miscarriage, why is she still upset?” It has taken me a very long time to accept that grief does not have a time limit. I do not have to grieve a certain way because I suffered a pregnancy loss versus the loss of an infant or child. I was entitled to grieve how I needed to and when I needed to. Grieving a heartbeat was my truth, my life, my baby.

Since then, God has blessed my husband and I with a beautiful baby girl. She is now seven months old.



Miscarriage Facts:

- 1 in 4 women will experience miscarriage.
- Most miscarriages occur within the first 13 weeks.
- Reasons vary and are usually unidentified, but are often speculated to be caused by chromosomal abnormalities.

Ways to Offer Support:

- Listen. Sometimes people just want to talk about their experience.
- If they do want to share, ask questions and use the baby’s name or nickname.
- Remember grief manifests itself in different physical and emotional ways. Encourage the person to talk to someone when they experience these reactions.
- Encourage them to express pain, sadness, joy and other emotions.
- Remember that grief is an individual process.
- Encourage communication during special dates surrounding their loss and remember with them.

Information from the American Pregnancy Association.



STILL represents the silence of the thousands of babies who die during pregnancy or infancy and the steadfast resilience of their surviving families. STILL will be a feature-length documentary film that highlights the stories of families who have suffered the loss of a baby to pregnancy or infant loss. STILL will demonstrate how these families

have learned to cope in a society that is uncertain how to deal with infant loss and how to assess the value of an unborn child. To share your story or support this cause, contact Carrie Fisher-Pascual at (310) 308-3781 or carrie@planetzaya.com. Visit www.stillproject.org and follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

Thank you!

Every newsletter seems to bring another opportunity to say “thank you” to the generous community we live in. This one is no different.

The SRF is grateful to the Bridgewater Ruritan Club for inviting us to volunteer in their food booth at the Rockingham County Fair in exchange for a donation.

A record number of volunteers participated in this multi-day fundraiser. Whether busy serving food to hungry fair-goers or just available to help if needed, SRF volunteers showed their support for what we do by their presence. Still others couldn't help because of other commitments, but made a financial donation instead. The SRF family truly united at this event.

One volunteer wrote, “I cannot say enough nice things about all of those I worked with tonight at the fair. What a wonderful group of people. My life was changed forever when an acquaintance from college lost her little girl earlier this year. I ached for her and her deep loss, which I am sure is only small fractions to her pain. Tonight as I put together beef BBQ sandwiches, I thought about their daughter a lot. {All smiles} Your organization has blessed so many... God bless you.”

We were also blessed by a donation from Lee's 1992 graduating class of Fort Defiance High School during their 20th class reunion. We received a number of individual donations of money, time and volunteering and each one plays a significant role in our ability to continue offering this much-needed support. We are grateful for each of you who help make this support possible.

Calendar of Events

Sept 13: Informal Coffee, at the Sadie Rose office, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Come-and-go-as-you-please. Coffee and light refreshments provided. For those looking for support as well as for those interested in learning more about the Sadie Rose Foundation.

Sept 28: Monthly Support Meeting, Dayton Church of the Brethren, 7 p.m. Park in the back of the building (directly across from Cargill) and enter the double glass doors. Go straight ahead to kitchen/fellowship hall. Childcare available.

Oct 6: Dayton Days Doughnut Fundraiser, In front of our office on Main Street. We need volunteers to help make doughnuts on Friday and to sell on Saturday.

Oct 11: Informal Coffee, at the Sadie Rose office, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Come-and-go-as-you-please. Coffee and light refreshments provided. For those looking for support as well as for those interested in learning more about the Sadie Rose Foundation.

Oct 13: Remembrance Walk, Mountain View Park, Grottoes, 10 a.m. More details to come. This Walk to Remember corresponds with National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day.

Weekly Online Support Chat, Sundays, 9 p.m. EST. To participate, visit our website and click on the large “Support Group” button on the right sidebar.

Ongoing: Lee Harlow's Walk365. Lee is counting down the days as he has committed to walk 365 consecutive days to raise funds and awareness for The Sadie Rose Foundation. Sponsorship is available for \$1 a day, \$7 a week, \$30 a month, \$90 per quarter, \$180 per half-year or \$365 for the full year. He can have multiple sponsors per day/week. As of Sept 1, Lee has walked 251 consecutive days.

Looking Ahead: Mark your calendars and watch for details about our following events.

Nov. 23: Thanksgiving Meal

Dec. 9: Candlelight Ceremony

*For more information about any of our events or to volunteer, please write, email or call us:
P.O. Box 382 Dayton, VA 22821, 540-810-0307 or*

info-assistance@sadierosefoundation.org.

Candlelight Ceremony Slideshow Submissions

Each year, on the second Sunday of December, the Sadie Rose Foundation participates in the Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candlelight Ceremony to remember our children gone too soon. People around the world light candles at 7 p.m. in their respective time zones to create a continuous wave of light for 24 hours. As part of our ceremony, one of our group moms, Tanya Bennett, puts together a slideshow with pictures of our children. We invite you to email a photo (or a photo to represent your child such as an angel or a teddy bear) to Tanya at momy2_an_angel@comcast.net to be included in this year's slideshow. Please include your child's name, date of birth and date of death along with a jpeg file of the photo you wish to use. You can also mail the information to Tanya at 304 13th St., Grottoes, VA 24441. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

The Sadie Rose Foundation

P.O. Box 382
Dayton, VA 22821

Phone: 540-810-0307
Cell: 540-810-4351
E-mail: info-assistance@sadierosefoundation.org

Learn more at
www.sadierosefoundation.org

Because the path of grief after losing
a child should never be walked alone.

The Sadie Rose Foundation is a non-profit organization that offers support to families that have lost a child. We were founded in 2008 in memory of Sadie Rose Harlow, infant daughter of Lee and Regina Harlow. Along with monthly support meetings, informal coffees and weekly online support chats, we offer one-on-one support at our office and a number of annual remembrance ceremonies. We are available to help with funeral planning or funeral meals when called upon to do so. Bereaved families are also invited to share their story on our website and connect with us on Facebook. For a complete list of our services, visit our website or call our office.

The Sadie Rose Foundation
P.O. Box 382
Dayton, VA 22821