



Forget-Me-Not Newsletter

CHRISTINE’S CORNER

BY: CHRISTINE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**“How lucky I am having something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”
~Winnie the Pooh**

As the season is transitioning from fall to winter, we at the Network are also transitioning. As we enter a New Year, 2022, I will be saying goodbye as Executive Director. During my time with the Network I have paid witness to so much heartache BUT also so much hope, resilience, courage, strength and so much love and healing.

“Grief never ends... but it changes. It’s a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith... It is the price of love.” ~ Author Unknown

As I reflect on all these moments over the years, I embrace my journey as a bereaved mom, a friend, a director, colleague, caretaker, supporter, and a bereaved family member.

I feel beyond blessed having met so many wonderful people along my journey and have formed lifelong friendships and an extended forever family I will cherish. I am so proud of the hard work and growth we have accomplished at the Network. This would not have been possible without the support and dedication of our Board of Directors, Volunteers, Sponsors, Donors and My Family. Because of this perseverance and dedication we are able to continue to provide the instrumental services to bereaved families in our community

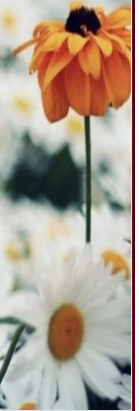
Always remember, we are together united, supported, hopeful, and embraced by the love that our children have given us that brought us all together. So, together we journey to remember, mourn, celebrate and keep their love alive, as we journey on our way.

To My Jacob, you have left a forever imprint on my heart and your brief life has forever changed me and the families we continue to support through your Wings of Love Memorial Fund. Your legacy lives on forever ~ Butterfly Kisses Buddy, I love you ~Love Lives Forever

Wishing you all a Peaceful Holiday Season.

Stay Safe and Well,
Christine

Bring love
wherever
you go.
Shine light
wherever
it's dark.
Leave blessings
wherever
you've been.
Be kind
wherever
you are.
mary davis



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FORGET-YOU-NOTS

Michael Anthony Anderson April 5, 2005

Always, always in our Hearts! Love, Nana & Papa xxxooo
We love you always! Love, Mommy, Daddy & Mia
Parents: Michael & Kelly Anderson

Lilya Raine Arena September 26, 2009

Hugs to the sky, baby! Mommy, Daddy and little sister Wil-
low love and miss you.
Parents: Kelly & Michael Arena

Jivae Andrea Báez December 28, 2012

Our beautiful baby girl... we love and miss you every second
of every day. Thank you for your sweet baby brother Jamari.
All our love all our life. Love, Mommy and Daddy.
Parents: Evelyn & Jarred Báez

Riley James Croce March 8, 2010

Gabrielle Irene Croce August 3, 2010

Baby Croce December 9, 2013

Parents: Lena & Dan Croce

Juju Dintcheva David February 27-28, 2016

Baby Dintcheva David November 17, 2018

Frozen Dintcheva David August 27, 2019

Miracle Dintcheva David June 29, 2020

Our amazing twins December 2020

Our amazing triplets March 2021

May you all rest in peace and watch over us left behind.

Parents: Elka Dintcheva & Jonathan David

Baby D March 11, 2013

Selah Grace Doring October 30, 2013

We carry you in our hearts - Forever & Always,

Mommy, Daddy, Preston & Kendra

Parents: Emily & Todd Doring

John Paul Jerebko November 18, 1999

Our little angel! Love, Mom, Dad, Jakob & Jackson

Parents: Peter & Lisa Jerebko

Baby Boy Jonathan June 8, 2018

You will be forever loved & sadly missed.

Parents: LaRue & Leilan Jonathan

Marrina Kim August 3-4, 2005

Ella Grace Kim June 8, 2007

We love you and think of you so very often. Please watch
over us... now and always.

Parents: Dawn & Mark Kim

Bud Charles Mott September 12, 2005

Theresa Marie Mott September 12, 2005

"Blueberry" Mott January 21, 2014

Baby Mott December 23, 2014

Miss you with all of our hearts, Theresa, Bud, "Blueberry"
and Baby Mott. God knows our pain and sadness. We know
that someday, we will see you again.

All our love ~ Daddy, Mommy & Allison

Parents: Timothy & Beth Mott

Michael James Quigley October 24, 1992

Miss you more and more! 'Til we meet again!

Love, mom

Parent: Debi Zmuda

Jacob Wesley Scott May 27, 2000

We love you and think of you every day! Butterfly kisses
buddy!

Love, Mom, Dad, Thomas & Mandy

Parents: Phillip & Christine Scott

Steven James Serrano March 16, 06

Parent: Lisa Graziano

Margie Faye Willis May 22, 2019

Parents: Katie & Brandon Willis

Grace Lee Zimmer April 12, 2012

Until we meet again, fly sweet butterfly, fly! A moment in
our arms, A lifetime in our hearts.

Love, Mom, Dad, Hunter and Luke

Parents: Donna & Russell Zimmer

*For the Time Being, please submit memorials
and safe arrivals to Emily Doring at
Emily@wnypbn.org
until a new editor can be established.*

SAFE ARRIVALS:

Paige Dietz was born to Steve & Stephanie Dietz on May 19,
2021. The family will always remember her brother, David
Nelson who was born to heaven on January 8, 2020.

Parents, Courtney Bajdas and Matthew Barnhardt, wel-
comed **Martha Jean** to their family. Martha's big sisters will
tell her all about big brother Andrei (October 17, 2011).

EVENTS COORDINATOR / ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT WANTED

BY: WNYPBN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network (WNYPBN) is seeking a part-time, professional, outgoing and motivated individual to join our organization in the role of Events Coordinator.

The successful candidate will have a high attention to detail, be well organized, and enjoy building relationships with our sponsors and donors. While working closely with the Program Director the candidate will plan, coordinate, implement, and report the logistics of all WNY Perinatal Bereavement Events while creating new events and fundraisers throughout the year, while assisting in administrative duties.

Responsibilities

- Form and lead committees for various WNYPBN fundraising and memorial events
- Seek sponsors, donors, and volunteers for WNYPBN events
- Work with ongoing donors to enhance and secure future donations
- Assist with all promotional materials for each event
- Manage event donations, sponsorships, revenues, and expenses

- Provide day-of support for staff, volunteers, and others involved in the event proceedings
- Ensure that all events meet their stated purpose: fundraising, honoring families, etc.
- Follow up with supporters of events to ensure continued professional relationships and foster those relationships for future donation/sponsorship

Marketing Qualifications:

- Previous experience in Special events or other related fields
- High School diploma or GED required
- Knowledge of Donor data base- Blackbaud, Justgiving, etapestry, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
- Strong organizational skills
- Strong leadership qualities
- Deadline and detail-oriented
- Flexibility to meet organization and event needs
- Create new events including virtual fundraisers

NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THE WNYPBN

BY: DAWN BOTH-KIM

The WNYPBN is experiencing a great transition to the Staff and primary volunteers. Our Executive Director, Christine Scott, after much soul-searching and deep consideration as made the courageous decision to step down from her position with the Network. It is so sad to say goodbye to such an amazing Executive Director, trusted confidant and beloved friend. Her absence will be felt by all. We all wish Christine the best.

Taking on the reigns as the new Program Director is the wonderful Emily Doring. Emily is a bereaved mother and has acted as the Administrative Assistant with the WNYPBN for the past seven months. Emily is also on the Board of Directors of Angel Gowns of WNY and has helped that organization bloom. She is training with Christine Scott, such that she can assist the Network accomplish all the goals necessary to help families and honor lives.

Also stepping down as Event Coordinator is Kelly Anderson. Kelly has been instrumental in so many of the WNYPBN

events for the past several years. We will all miss her help and leadership at every event. But most of all, we will miss her hugs!

Finally, Dawn Both-Kim is permanently stepping down as editor of the Forget-Me-Not Newsletter, Board of Directors and volunteering at all of the events. Dawn cannot fully express her sadness in making this decision, but wishes all the best for the Network. She intends to assist with the transition for the new staff, chair persons and volunteers as is needed.

As always, the Network wishes all of these ladies the best in all their future endeavors. We also would like to welcome Emily into her new position with the WNYPBN and will help to make this transition the smoothest possible.

If you are interested in stepping up into any of these vacant positions, please contact Emily Doring at (716)626-6363 or at Emily@wnypbn.org for more information.

MONTH OF THANKFULNESS: ELEGANT EVENING TO REMEMBER AWARD WINNERS

The 9th Annual WNYPBN Elegant Evening to Remember was unable to be held due to circumstances beyond our control. Therefore, we are celebrating our 2020-2021 award recipients virtually throughout November, our Month of Thankfulness! Each week, a category of award winners will be highlighted on our Facebook page. Information about all of our award winners can be found on our JustGiving website:

www.justgiving.com/campaign/MonthOfThanksgiving

We celebrate the commitment and dedication of those who continue to help us grow, for they have bloomed where they were planted in helping those in need! Sincere congratulations to all of our award recipients. We recognize the volunteers, physicians, nurses, individuals and organizations that have made a significant impact on the bereaved community in Western New York. Together, we will continue to help families, honor lives, and provide hope, healing and peace for the future.

*"The Flower that blooms in adversity
is the rarest and most beautiful of all."
~ Disney's Mulan*

Physicians of the Year

These three awards are for the Private Based Physician, the Community Based Physician and the NICU Based Physician. These Doctors went above and beyond the call of duty by not only extending their hand and hearts to families during and after the death of their baby, but throughout their healing journey by supporting the programs of the WNYPBN. These dedicated physicians were nominated by a group of their professional peers and the bereaved parents they have impacted. The compassionate presence of a physician is not only crucial during the initial news given to a parent that their baby has died or that death is imminent, but also after this tragedy becomes a reality.

Private Based Physician of the Year

[Dr. Kristen Smyers, MD, FACOG](#)

Dr. Smyers graduated from the University of Buffalo State University of N.Y. School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. She owns and practices at Legacy Gynecology PLLC. Dr. Smyers cares for women throughout



their pregnancies, straight throughout to the delivery of their baby along with diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the female reproductive system. She provides complete over-

all health services to women at every stage of life. One of her patients stated: "I can't say enough about the care I have received from Dr. Smyers, I have a lot of trauma surrounding my pregnancies and I truly believe I was able to be strong because of the support and reassurance she has provided me. She is an incredible caregiver and I firmly believe all physicians should aspire to providing the type of patient first care that she provides."

IN HER OWN WORDS:

Thank you so much to the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network, Inc. for honoring me as "Physician of the Year" for 2020. It is a sincere honor to be named as such by my peers. Many fine physicians have received this award in previous years and I am proud to be in their company.

I am so grateful to this organization for the critical role they play in helping patients and their families. As a physician, I am with a patient to provide the difficult news of her loss and to treat her acutely. This is a short duration of time compared to the eternity for which she and her family will grieve their loss. Inevitably I must move on to treat the next patient. It is at that point that I am always so appreciative the WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network exists. While I can educate a patient as to expectations for her physical recovery, I cannot relate to her perinatal loss. To be able to refer patients for the continuation of compassionate care for any need they may have is invaluable. The bereaved patients who founded the Network truly understand in a way no one else can, how to find a way forward after such a tragedy. This connection I can provide is better than any treatment I could ever prescribe.

Reflecting on my first ten years in practice, the patients who first come to mind are those who have suffered a loss. While fortunately a small number, the impact they have had on me with the gratitude shown in spite of their grief, makes me so thankful I became an obstetrician and gynecologist. It is an honor to care for women at all stages of their lives but no greater than in their greatest moment of need.

Thank you to my nurses Chelsea and Amanda who pro-

vide exemplary compassion and genuine kindness to all our patients, but especially when needed the most. Thank you again to my peers for this recognition. Thank you WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network. And thank you to all of the patients who eventually find the strength to provide support through this wonderful organization.

Community Based Physician of the Year



Dr. Anne Marie Davis DO, FACOG

Dr. Davis is an obstetrician-gynecologist practicing at Neighborhood Health Center. Dr. Davis is affiliated with Sisters of Charity Hospital of Buffalo. She received her medical degree from West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and has been in practice over 6 years. One of her colleagues stated: "Dr. Davis is a beautiful example of an exemplary physician whose patients are more than lucky to have her at their bedside. She truly cares about her patients experience and not just that they are physically copacetic, but emotionally as well. She demonstrates an amazing level of empathy during particularly difficult situations; she doesn't shy away from the hard stuff. Every patient who encounters the loss of a baby should be treated as kindly as Dr. Davis treats her patients; she is truly a one of a kind."

IN HER OWN WORDS:

It is my honor to walk beside women and families as they go through tragedy and grief. It is my job to protect their grief and to give women space to be broke and undone.

Thank for all you do supporting women and allowing them to process and giving them a safe space to be broken.

NICU BASED PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD:

Dr. Jayasee Nair, MD

Dr. Nair completed her Residency in Pediatrics and fellowship in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at the University at Buffalo. Dr. Nair is part of UBMD Pediatric Associates caring for the tiniest patients at Oishei Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. One of Dr. Nair colleagues state: "I have worked with Dr. Nair the past couple of years and she has been extraordinary with her patients. She is often called upon to provide consults to patients at OCH whose babies have been diagnosed with life limiting or life ending diagnosis.



She is professional, compassionate and empathetic while speaking with the families, answering questions and taking the time needed to fully explain the potential outcomes. She is open and honest with the families and helps assist them with making difficult medical decisions in regards to their babies care, while remaining supportive of their wishes and desires. I remember one particular family in which she continued to monitor the patient after he was discharged home into Hospice care, checking in and even attending the funeral after his passing. She is genuine in the loving care she provides."

IN HER OWN WORDS:

I am honored to receive this award from the WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network. As a neonatologist taking care of extremely sick babies, I am thrilled when I can successfully manage and send a healthy baby home to their family. However, it is even more humbling and important to support a grieving family as they navigate a different course for their child, one which involves taking home only memories. Each family I have had the privilege of supporting has taught me something-resilience, elegance and so much love in a time of grief.

Thank you to all my colleagues and our team at OCH NICU for making a difference.

NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD:

This award is given to a very deserving nurse. The care given to the mothers and families after the loss of a baby from bereavement nurses is extraordinary. Many times a lifetime bond is formed as they work with these families during this tragic & intimate experience. We see this happen over and over again. They guide families to create a lifetime of memories within a very short window of time with unconditional time and love. The presence and care given to these parents as they begin their lifelong healing journey is passionately profound.

Nancy Owen, RN, BSN, CLC

Nancy is a Registered nurse and Maternity Clinical Educator at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital. Nancy has been very instrumental in raising awareness & is extremely compassionate to all



her patient's especially those who have lost their baby, one colleague states. "Nancy is a Team player filled with the biggest compassionate heart, She goes above and beyond for all her patients and holds a special place in her heart for the tiniest of angels."

IN HER OWN WORDS:

Thank you for this honor from the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network. I am deeply touched and humbled. But I am even more humbled when I am with families at any point during this agonizing time of loss.

Grief with the loss of a baby through miscarriage, still-birth, or early infant death can be shocking, shattering, and unbearable. Supporting families in whatever way possible, whether it is at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital or at a later time with a subsequent pregnancy means so much to me. It helps me to learn and grow through awareness and reflection. It is both heart wrenching and inspiring to be part of a family's journey through the unthinkable as they move toward healing and remembrance with courage and strength.

I would like to thank Christine Scott for the Perinatal Bereavement Conferences and staff trainings that she has organized and held. Christine has modeled and taught our staff the importance of understanding communication during trauma and memory making.

Thank you to the families that have allowed me to be with them in some way at such a personal time in their lives. They remain in a lasting place not only in my heart but the hearts of our staff as we remember them and their babies.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD:

This award is given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the WNYPBN, Inc and its mission throughout the year.

Aaron Sypniewski CPA Controller.

Aaron is a Bereaved father to Harper Sophia, honor date October 14, 2014. Aaron is a CPA Controller who behind the scenes, volunteers countless hours each week offer-



ing his time and expertise with our NYS certification. Aaron also has held a fundraising event in honor of his daughter to support all of our network programs. He is a tremendous resource for us all and we are so grateful for his dedication and hard work.

IN HIS OWN WORDS:

First and foremost, I am tremendously honored to be recognized by an organization that has done so much for myself and my family. WNYPBN, likely unknowingly, has aided our family in the healing process through remembrance and honoring of our own perinatal loss, Harper Sophia Sypniewski. It is through events like The Walk to Remember we are given the time and place to recognize, remember and cherish our time with our daughter who was taken from us much too early. We are able to do this with the support of our family and friends. It's experiences like these that I believe help to slowly close the wound from the loss of a child.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD:

The definition of Community Service is services volunteered by an individual or an organization to benefit a community or its institutions. They have provided outstanding support to the WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network and bereaved parents throughout the year.

Katharine Meyer & Arthur's Light



Katharine Meyer & Arthur's Light is receiving the Community Service award. Katharine is the bereaved mother of Arthur James Woodin, who came in to this world still on Feb. 16, 2018. Katharine

wanted to keep Arthur's legacy alive and help other families during their darkest days so she, along with Matthew Woodin, created Arthur's Light program.

They have partnered with the WNYPBN and hospital programs to provide bereaved families with a candle as a token of light at the end of a tunnel. Their hopes are that these candles will bring comfort for families with a flicker of a flame to light their way and gain some peace. It brings them such joy that Arthur's name is being spoken and written by so many people and his legacy will live forever. Love Lives Forever

IN HER OWN WORDS:

It was with great honor to receive the Community Service Award through the WNYPBN. I am grateful for the recognition for my work within the bereaved community because of the Arthur's Light candle program. The support from the community over the last 3 plus years have been overwhelming and I am happy to be apart of others healing journeys. I want to thank my family and friends

for their continued love and remembrance of Arthur James. And a special thank you to Christine Scott for embracing me at my worst and helping me to dig out of the darkness. Let the light shine.

Constance J. Perna, RN LFD



Connie has served on our Board of Directors for many years and is a Champion for our Network. Her compassionate care she gives to families in their time of need is priceless. One bereaved mother stated, "she

listened to me with a compassionate heart and supported me while I was faced to say goodbye to my baby." With a long history of professional, compassionate care, Connie runs day to day operations of the funeral home and is the daughter of funeral home founder Frank Perna. She is also the bereaved mother of Nicole. We are

beyond grateful for Connie's big Heart and generosity!

IN HER OWN WORDS:

It has been a privilege to serve with the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network Board and be part of this amazing and invaluable organization. Each and every board member is passionate about our mission and driven to ensure that families are given the support and resources they need to move through their journey of grief.

I am truly humbled and honored to receive this Community Service Award in recognition of my commitment and dedication to families that I have served professionally. As a bereaved mother, during the loss of our daughter Nicole many years ago, resources that were available to myself and my family were very limited. I recognize the importance of the network and all the help and tools offered not only to the bereaved parents but surviving siblings and extended family members.

As a community we are truly blessed that the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network is available for families now and all that it offers to our families in need. This Network will continue to be the lifeline to a place of emotional healing for families who have experienced the loss of their baby in the days to come.

 **WNYPBN, Inc.**
proudly presents

The Bills Mafia Raffle

Raffle for Autographed Buffalo Bills Memorabilia

Josh Allen
Jersey

Jordan Poyer
Football

Tremaine Edmunds
Cleat

\$10 per ticket

Ticket Sales to Begin in Late November

Keep an eye out for ticket information on our Facebook page, our website (wnypbn.org) and for email messages!

Proceeds to benefit the Wings of Love Memorial Fund



Grief and Christmas go together like fire and ice. When everyone around you wants to be happy and joyful, you just want to be alone with the pain, curl up and hide. It's okay, it's your grief, do it your way...

*Kamp Thomas
if money can fix it - it ain't broke*

TARA'S PAGE

By: Tara Petty, LMSW

As the holidays are approaching, I want to remind everyone about our support groups that are currently available. We have two virtual Tiniest Angels Support Groups running. Our newest one, Fathers of Tiniest Angels, meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6pm and is for fathers. We have changed the time of our original group, which is open to all parents, to the third Tuesday of the month at 6pm. If you are interested in attending either group, please send an email to tara@wnypbn.org for a Zoom link.

There is also an opportunity to volunteer to support newly bereaved parents. Our Parent Telephone Support Team, which offers peer to peer support for parents experiencing a recent loss, is in need of volunteers. As a volunteer, you would be matched with a parent with a new loss similar to the one you experienced and reach out to provide emotional support. If this is something you are interested in learning more about, please send an email to tara@wnypbn.org for more information.

**Get help now:
CRISIS TEXT LINE
Text FUTURE to
741741 for free,
24/7 support in the U.S.**

Tiniest Angels

Virtual Coffee Hour

Join us for our monthly support groups

Share your story of loss and find support among other bereaved parents.



For All Parents:
3rd Tuesday of the month
6:00pm – 7:00pm

For Fathers:
2nd Tuesday of the month
6:00pm – 7:00pm

Contact: Tara Petty, LMSW
(RSVP to get Zoom link)

tara@wnypbn.org • (716) 626-6363
A program of the WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network



5 WAYS TO HELP THOSE REMEMBERING BABY LOSS IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON

MANY HOLIDAY TRADITIONS REPRESENT LIGHT AND BIRTH, AND FOR A FAMILY COPING WITH PREGNANCY OR INFANT LOSS, THE IRONIES AND COMPANION ABSENCES CAN BE TOO STARK TO BEAR EASILY.

BY: TARA SHAFER, CONTRIBUTOR

CO-FOUNDER OF [RECONCEIVINGLOSS.COM](http://reconceivingloss.com/),
AN ONLINE RESOURCE CENTER FOR FAMILIES COPING WITH PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS.

The holidays are upon us and this presents challenges for families coping with baby loss. For the bereaved, the overt and unremitting emphasis on family and celebration may be both stifling and exhausting. Many holiday traditions represent light and birth, and for a family coping with pregnancy or infant loss, the ironies and companion absences can be too stark to bear easily. On the flip side, it is understandably difficult for caring friends and family to know how to best approach the painful and taboo subject of perinatal loss in the context of the joy-on-overdrive-holidays.

My second son was stillborn in December 2005. At that time, I had a 2-year-old son. I remember one evening I sat staring, devastated, into a crackling fire and ruminated about my baby's cremation. Next to me, my 2-year-old squealed, delighted in the discovery of his face reflected back in a glass ornament as notes from Judy Garland's "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" hung in the air. It was snowing. The distances I was required to travel between true joy and abject despair at each moment during that time were so vast, that if it is the case that I am still sane, I am left to wonder how that it is so.

At Christmas dinner several days later, I stood near a fire pushing food around my plate as my extended family gathered to celebrate peace and joy. No one there attempted to talk to me about my loss. This was not, I know, for lack of love. In fact, it was because of love -- they did not want to remind me of my loss. They wanted so much for me to be happy, but negotiating this impossibility was complicated and awkward.

It is this sort of well-intended silence that feeds a self-imposed gag order around loss. This can make the baby-bereaved feel especially alone and adrift in a season of light that emphasizes children, miracles and family. In addition, many family gatherings have representatives from generations wherein discussion of death and baby loss is simply not permitted.

There are many responses to baby and child loss. Take care to remember that there is no "right" or one-size-fits-all response. However, reaching out to people is very often far more appreciated than is immediately apparent. Even if a couple prefers to be private in their remembrance, they will appreciate your consideration in asking. Once a dialogue is opened, you can trust yourself to follow the lead and wishes of the parents in question, and even allow responses to change as time goes on. For those who surround the bereaved, it may be difficult to know just how to acknowledge loss as experienced by loved one(s). Here are a few sugges-

tions:

- 1. DO offer to create an annual family ritual.** Light a candle in memory, and in support of the bereaved parents. If you already light candles in ritual, ask to include the baby and the bereaved parents.
- 2. DO be aware of dynamics in family/friend relationships.** For example, if there is a baby at a holiday gathering, consider gently letting the bereaved know that you are thinking of her/her/him. If your sister-in-law had a loss and you have a baby, consider ways to let her know that you wish that things were different and that you want to help her.
- 3. DO consider making a memorial donation in the name of the baby to a charity important to the family,** or one that supports children in need. If the baby was named, DO use the name of the baby. The use of a name may be deeply validating to a family coping with loss.
- 4. DO ask about fathers' experience of loss.** This loss is even less recognized than the experience of the mother. Let the father know that you recognize that the loss is his as well, and ask how you can support him.
- 5. DO engage in discussion about loss.** Many bereaved parents derive strength and love from an acknowledgment of their pain. In many instances, the memory of loss may stay with parents for a lifetime. It is both ironic and understandable that it is precisely this validation of pain that draws the bereaved closer, cinching the fabric of complex and encompassing familial love as it lifts a veil of silence.



28TH ANNUAL WALK TO REMEMBER

BY: EMILY DORING



The Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network's 28th Annual Walk to Remember took place on Sunday, October 10th, 2021. It was our first in-person gathering since the Covid-19 Pandemic began in March 2020.

Our Walk to Remember looked different, in many ways, than in past years. There was no big service where everyone gathered together, no family picnic following the Walk, nor a Kids Zone where kids could play in the bounce houses or make a craft to take home. Despite these changes, the WNYPNB determined that we needed to safely gather, in any way that was possible, for the growth and healing journey of the families that we support.

The day of our Walk was beautiful: full of sunshine, despite a cool, dreary forecast. This sunshine was displayed on the faces of those that were able to join us at the Cheektowaga Town Park. Being together as families, supporting each other and walking in memory of our children was a beautiful sight. There were beautiful and reflective songs and poems played throughout the park while the registration, and subsequent Walk took place. These poems were selected and read by the Walk Committee. The one-mile Angel Memorial Mile path around the Cheektowaga Town Park was still filled with the signs of the names of our Angel babies. You can experience the Walk by viewing the video on our website (wnypbn.org)

Along the Angel Memorial Mile pathway, was the Bradford Pear tree that was planted this year in memory of our babies. Each year, we supply paper notes to be written on and planted within the roots of that tree. Each memory, tribute or expression of love that was written, was placed with the roots of the tree before it was planted. As these notes degrade, they nourish and become part of the heart of the tree as your baby is always a part of you. We are so

thankful to the Cheektowaga Town Park for allowing us to plant a tree, in our babies' honor each year.

There was a beautiful "Pumpkin Patch" set up near the registration tables. Each pumpkin had a hand-painted heart with the names of our babies. It was heartwarming to see some of the children, searching for their sibling's name on their pumpkin. The Walk banner that also displays the names of our loved ones was hung along the fence just inside the entrance.

Families were able to walk the Angel Memorial Mile path at any time during our event. Many have expressed appreciation that they could walk at their own pace and as many times as they wanted. We know that the children in attendance missed the bounce houses and craft table that we have had in past years. However, through the generosity and help of local businesses, we were able to put together a kids' craft and snack bag for those 12 and under! There were many excited faces of little ones, as they opened their bags to see all of the little goodies that were inside. Families received snack bags in lieu of our family picnic. Many stayed at the park, after the walk, and held their own picnic gatherings.

For many bereaved families, this Walk to Remember is an annual tradition to honor the memory of their baby. No matter how you decide to honor your baby, please know that the WNYPNB is here for you.

"Take my hand and walk with me...with you, I know I am not alone." -DBK

This quote rings so true. In the midst of the uncertainty in our community today, it is much more important to know that we are not alone in our grief journeys. With the isolation that has become more normal over the past year and a half, the feelings of being alone are stronger more than ever. There is a two-fold meaning to being never alone. The first, our babies live on in our hearts and in our minds. They are always with us. Every second that we breathe,



PUMPKIN PATCH: PRE-REGISTERED FAMILIES RECEIVED A PUMPKIN WITH A HAND-PAINTED HEART WITH THEIR BABY'S NAMES.

every heartbeat, reminds us that they are a part of us. The second, we are not alone as bereaved parents. This Walk shows us that there are so many that are walking the same path of being bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and loved ones. Our journeys may look different, but we are on the same path needing healing and comfort. Some may have been on this journey for many years, and are further along the path. Many have just started their journeys. We can all learn something from each other, no matter where we are along the path.

Stop. Breathe. Be still. Remember. Open your hearts to walk this journey with those around you. ~ Emily Doring

Thank you to the Friends and Families of the bereaved parents that have raised funds to support the WNYPBN in honor of their Angel babies. These are our top fundraisers.

Joanna Weld \$2,725.00 In honor of Nicholas Mark Weld 4/15/19

Ryan Cretacci \$2,300.00 In honor of Parker & Peyton Cretacci 9/2/21

Aaron Sypniewski \$1,400.00 In honor of Harper Sophia 10/14/14

Tom Ingalsbe \$1,237.00 In honor of Alyssa Sophia 12/21/12

Molly Hamilton \$1,000.00 In honor of Reid Hamilton 4/18/21

Thank you to the Sponsors for our 28th Annual Walk to Remember. We are so thankful for your continued dedication and support of WNYPBN. Please remember to support those who support us!



MANY OF THE WALK TO REMEMBER COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Heart Sponsors:

- Bank on Buffalo
- Senator Tim Kennedy
- Lakeshore Primary Care Associates
- Hunt Mortgage

Pumpkin Sponsors:

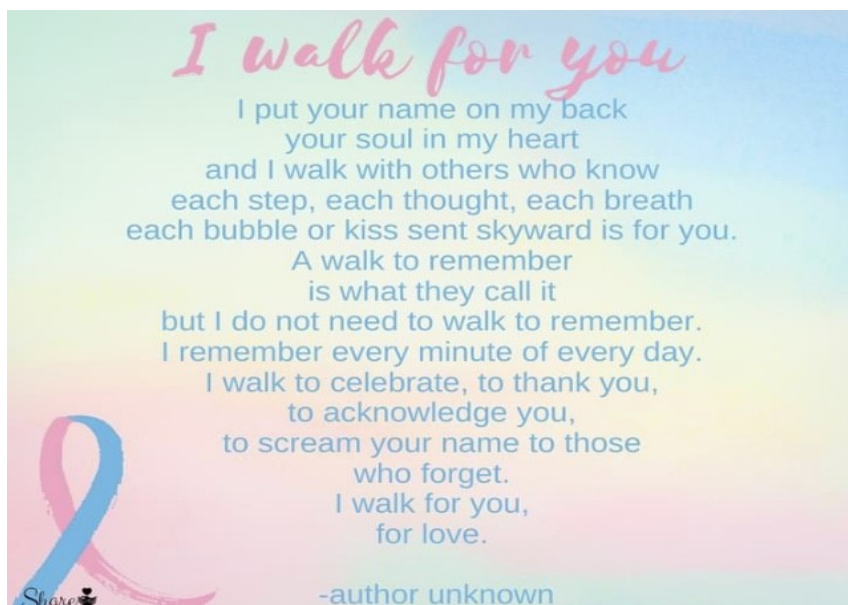
- KMR Heating & Cooling
- Mount Calvary Cemetery
- Moderncraft Home Improvement Co.

Flower Sponsor:

- Angel Gowns of WNY, Inc.
- Buffalo Prenatal- Perinatal Network, Inc.
- Wagner Monuments
- J & L Premier Landscape

Supporting Sponsors:

- Home Depot
- Wegmans
- Pietszak Funeral Home
- Petals to Please
- Hale Expo Services
- Target
- DJ Tim Mott



There were a few extra fundraisers held during October which raised money for the WNYPBN, Inc.

Jeremy White, bereaved father, local celebrity and radio personality, again worked with 26 Shirts with their "Fall is Elite" sweatshirt fundraiser. They were able to raise \$1360 to support the important programs of the WNYPBN.

Also, Medal Chasers, a virtual running and rewards program, was able to raise \$744 for the Wings of Love Memorial Fund with their "Forever in My Heart" virtual race. To see more information, please see their website at:

www.medalchasersvrc.com/post/forever-in-my-heart-results



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*Helping Families,
Honoring Lives*

Our Mission

The mission of the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network, Inc. is to assist the community in meeting the needs of people facing the pain of perinatal death. We promote standards of bereavement care intervention through educational support, community programs and referral services to bereaved parents. The WNYPBN supports an established standard of care following a perinatal loss, regardless of the location of where the loss took place.

Member Organizations

Angel Gowns of Western New York
Baby's Sweet Beginning's Breastfeeding & Maternity Boutique, Lancaster
Brooks Memorial Hospital
Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Inc.
Catholic Health System (Mercy Hospital, Sister's Hospital, Mount St. Mary's)
Mount St. Mary's Hospital of Lewiston
Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo, Inc.—Essential Care for Children
Kaleida Health (Oishei Children's Hospital, Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital)
Jones Memorial Hospital
Wilson Support Center
Niagara Falls Memorial Hospital
Olean General Hospital
United Memorial Medical Center
UPMC Chatauga
Wyoming County Community Health Center

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