

## Remembering: Telling the Story

By Amy Stevens, Executive Directors

My front yard is far from paradise. Some folks display their gardening prowess and knack for creating curb appeal; my yard is functional and home to several significant plants. Every autumn the leaves on my Legacy Maple Tree turn fiery red. In April, my Lilac bushes bloom wildly. And I remember.

Within a month of my mother's death in October of 2008, a group of friends arrived with a tiny sapling of a tree, dug a hole and planted that tree. They did not know that my mother's favorite color was red, nor the significance of the leaves turning that time of year. To my family it is "Grammie's tree." I think of her every autumn as the leaves change colors. And the life cycle of that tree speaks to the aching parts of my heart, while reminding me that life here on earth is a cycle. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Each April, the two lilac bushes bloom to remind me of the two babies we lost to tubal pregnancies. One died in April. The other would have been due in April. Both bushes are fragrant, reminding me that pleasantries still exist in this world. I am invited to slow down, smell the blooms, and reflect a bit. It is healing and important to remember.

For many of us who have lost a baby, and subsequently our dreams for that baby, telling the story is both healing and validating. "My baby was real! Her name was..." Our babies continue to be real. But in order to tell their stories, we might need visual aids. There are many ways to tell the stories. Here are a few simple suggestions:

Plant a tree or a bush.

Create a memorial garden stone.

Put together a scrap book or a shadow box.

Make a charitable contribution in your baby's name.

Create or order personalized jewelry with baby's name or birth stone.

Choose a "random acts of kindness" day. (Print up information cards to hand out.)

Display a wall hanging with baby's name.

Release balloons with baby's name or a written message.

Visit a forum to tell your story. One example is [www.facesofloss.com](http://www.facesofloss.com)

In today's world of internet searches, Etsy, and Pinterest there is no shortage of ideas to memorialize a baby's life. And while there are many options, they are not a checklist. One would not be a better parent for having achieved them all. It is important that the act or product created serves as a healing reminder and a safe place to validate a baby's existence.

Find a way to tell the story. Find a way to remember.