

Angel of Hope Statue provides hope to families who have lost children

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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MARYVILLE - The Anderson Chapter of SHARE held its annual memorial event Saturday on the grounds of Anderson Hospital and also unveiled a new angel statue for the organization.

The rain and clouds didn't stop or dampen the spirit of over a hundred gathered at **Anderson Hospital** to remember the littlest lives lost, and unveil a beautiful monument that honors them forever.

SHARE Chapter Leader, **Barb Donahue, R.N.**, said the SHARE program started at Anderson Hospital in 2007. She said the walk and memorial ceremony is always moving, but was especially so this year with the statue unveiling.

“Parents come together and now will lay flowers at the angel statue,” she said. “We fund-raised for two years and had a dream of an Angel of Hope Statue and now it is a reality. St. Charles, Mo., has one. I don’t think we will really be able to comprehend the impact of it until the future. It will have a lasting impact.”

The Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support (SHARE) organization was created to serve those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or in the first few months of life. SHARE is a national organization with a chapter at Anderson Hospital.

Donahue said those who have lost children either before or after birth have a new appreciation for life.

“Priorities change for people who have lost children,” she said.

This year’s event was historical in that it was the first to be held on the Anderson Hospital campus, and it unveiled an “Angel of Hope” monument that took years of fundraising to come to fruition. The Angel of Hope statue gives all parents – and anyone facing grief – a place of comfort and solace.

Despite the weather, over a hundred participants came out for the event. Participants had weathered storms far worse than what Saturday’s weather brought. And miraculously, the rain ceased for the few hours that everyone gathered to unite and remember their babies.

“We lost our son **Caleb Michael Mayfield** on August 22, 2008,” said **Elizabeth Mayfield**. “The walk every year brings me comfort and peace knowing that he will always be remembered.”

The Angel of Hope monument was unveiled at the event after years of fundraising, much of it raised by families of the SHARE community.

“My families are amazing,” said Donahue of her SHARE Group members. “They all made this happen.”

Along with the families, nearly a dozen Pavilion for Women staff volunteer to manage the event as well. “It takes the work of so many, and I’m so thankful,” said Donahue.

The SHARE Group meets monthly at Anderson Hospital. The primary purpose is to provide support toward positive resolution of grief experienced at the time of, or following the death of a baby. This support encompasses emotional, physical, spiritual and social healing, as well as sustaining the family unit.

The secondary purpose is to provide information, education, and resources on the needs and rights of bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to aid those in the community, including family, friends, employers, members of the congregation, caregivers, professionals, and others in a supportive role. For more information, call (618) 391-5984.