

# Expressions

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year and our Autumn edition of Expressions.

If you are a bereaved parent reading this newsletter for the first time, please be assured you are not alone and we are here to provide support at any time.

As we step into a new year following the Christmas season, we recognise that this time can bring a mix of emotions. For many bereaved families, the holidays may have been especially tender; filled with remembrance, reflection and love for the babies who are always part of our story.

In the months ahead, we remain committed to walk alongside you with compassion and care. To help you navigate the challenging dates on the calendar for Easter and Mother's Day.

Thank you for being part of our community. Whether you are a parent, volunteer, supporter or friend, your presence and connection are truly valued.

Together we will navigate the year ahead with hope, connection and the shared commitment to honour every precious life.



Much appreciation  
**Your Sands  
Auckland Committee**  
*Sara, Tania, Linda & Andy*

## YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your poems, reflections and personal stories for inclusion in our newsletter.

Some parents find it helpful and cathartic to write about their babies, their grief or their experiences. If you would like to share these with our readers we would be honoured to publish them in our newsletter. Many parents find comfort in reading other peoples' stories and to know they are not alone, so your submissions would be greatly appreciated.

The deadline for our next edition is 20th May 2026.

Please forward your submissions to: [info@sandsauckland.org.nz](mailto:info@sandsauckland.org.nz)

### Note to our readers:

Many of the writings featured in our newsletter are the personal narrative of our readers. These, in their entirety or part, may not be printed elsewhere without permission. The nature of these 'stories' is very personal and has not been edited, therefore the views expressed may not necessarily be those of Sands Auckland. Where possible we have acknowledged the original source of all material/ information used in Expressions.



## DATES TO NOTE

### Support Group Meetings

1st Thursday of each month

5th March

2nd April

5th March

7th May

4th June

7.15pm – 8.45pm

Mt Albert Community  
and Leisure Centre  
(formerly the Y Mt Albert)  
773 New North Road, Mt Albert  
In the Garlick Room  
(to the left of reception desk)  
Parents & Whānau (adults only)

Please check our Facebook page where we post reminders and any changes to our meetings.

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### Other Support

Here are some additional support options:

Lifeline: 0800 543 354 or

Text Help to 4357

Samaritans: 0800 72 66 66

Skylight: 0800 299 100

(9am–5pm weekdays)

## CONTACT US:

[www.sandsauckland.org.nz](http://www.sandsauckland.org.nz)  
[info@sandsauckland.org.nz](mailto:info@sandsauckland.org.nz) Find us on Facebook



0508 SANDSA (72 63 72)

## Condolences

At the beginning of February, we learnt of the passing of Dawn Wood who was a former and valued Sands Auckland committee member and volunteer. Dawn was a beautiful soul who kindly walked alongside those in grief, providing compassionate support and connection.

Having started their journey at a similar time, Tania and Sara were able to pay their respects at Dawn's funeral, a touching service and tribute to her life. Our thoughts and aroha go out to her family; Nick, their boys Lucas and Austin, her parents Marie and Tony, and her wider whanau.

Dawn, may you rest in love and peace, reunited with your precious Riley and baby Angel.

We would also like to express our heartfelt condolences to Paul and Christine Gerrard and their family, following the passing of their beautiful 7-month old granddaughter Gwen. Paul has been the creative talent behind our newsletter for many years, and his wife Christine is one of our resident knitters. We are thinking of you all at this difficult time.

## Health Professional Training Opportunity

Vicki Culling Associates is offering an eight week short course in Baby Loss Essentials. This is a fantastic opportunity to upskill and assist you in your practice. For more information and to register, visit [www.vca.co.nz](http://www.vca.co.nz)

Vicki Culling Associates (VCA) invites maternity professionals, clinicians, child birth educators and those working in the area of baby loss to attend the new Professional Series Short Course....

### Baby Loss Essentials

This eight-week short course will be available three times in 2026. Four essential topics will be included - Baby Loss in Aotearoa NZ, Grief and Baby Loss, Language and Communication, and Pregnancy and Parenting After Loss.

Courses start on March 2nd, on June 1st and on August 31st and cost \$161 (\$140 +GST)

Join me for eight weeks online, to learn about these important aspects of baby loss, to hear from bereaved parents and whānau, and feel more confident and competent in your practice.

To register or for more information - see [www.vca.co.nz](http://www.vca.co.nz)



Sands Auckland is a charitable entity - Registration Number CC30352.

Thank you to all who support our group...

COGS Auckland City, Go Digital, Good Bitches Baking and the kind individuals who have made donations & held fundraisers.

We survive on grants and donations and greatly appreciate any gesture of support.

If you would like to make a donation you can visit our website for internet banking details or alternatively donate via our Give a Little page <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/sandsaucklandcentral>

Expressions is designed and printed by Paul Gerrard at Go Digital, supporter of Sands Auckland.

If you or your business have a need for design and print, Go Digital will donate 10% of that business to Sands.

Paul can be contacted on 0274 926681, or on email at: [paul@godigitalprint.co.nz](mailto:paul@godigitalprint.co.nz)



## Holding Both Love and Loss on Mother's Day

**M**other's Day can be one of the most tender and complex days of the year for bereaved mothers.

While the world fills with flowers, brunches, and celebration, many mums in our community are quietly holding grief alongside deep, enduring love for their babies.

For a bereaved mum, Mother's Day can bring a painful sense of absence. There may be the ache of empty arms, the silence where a voice should be, or the milestones that will never unfold as once imagined. Social media, advertisements, and well-meaning conversations can feel overwhelming, sometimes intensifying feelings of isolation or invisibility.

There can also be uncertainty. Am I still a mum? Do others see me as one? Is it okay to celebrate? These questions are common and valid. The truth is that motherhood is not defined by the length of time a baby was held, but by the love that exists — and that love does not end.

For some, Mother's Day may be about finding gentle ways to honour their baby: lighting a candle, visiting a special place, writing a letter, wearing a piece of jewellery with their baby's name, or simply speaking their baby's name aloud. For others, it may be about protecting their heart — turning off social media, declining invitations, or choosing quiet space over celebration. There is no right or wrong way to move through the day.

Mother's Day can also bring unexpected triggers — comments that miss the mark, assumptions about family size, or the absence of acknowledgement. A simple "I'm thinking of you and your baby today" can mean more than many realise.

At Sands Auckland, we hold space for every mother this Mother's Day — those parenting children in their arms, those whose babies live in their hearts, and those navigating both. We honour your motherhood. We honour your baby. And we stand with you in the courage it takes to carry love and loss together.

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A Whakataukī (affirmation) to help get through the day, or other times when calm and peace is needed:

Whakahāngia te aroha, Whakaputaina te mamae

Breathe in love, breathe out pain

### A Mother in the Quiet

Some mothers have lullabies.  
Some have bedtime stories.  
Some have photographs  
framed on the wall.

I have quiet.

I have a name  
spoken softly into the air.  
I have memories  
that live only in my heart.

I have love  
with nowhere to land —  
and everywhere to live.

The world may not see  
what made me a mother.  
There are no footprints in the  
sand,  
no toys left on the floor.

But there was a beginning.  
There was a baby.  
There was love.

And that is enough.

Today, in the quiet,  
I claim my place —  
a mother shaped by hope,  
by loss,  
by a love that will never  
leave.

