

FAQ for potential Heartfelt members

Q: “I have young children so I’m not sure if I can drop everything to cover a session request”.

A: Heartfelt sessions are often urgent and but many requests have longer lead times. All we ask is that you be an active participant and occasionally consider the possibility of juggling your commitments around to look after a Heartfelt family.

Q: “I’m worried I won’t be able to do many sessions so I won’t be of much help”.

A: All we ask is that our members commit to being available for at least 6 sessions a year. The few times you are able to say ‘yes’ to a session may be the time when no one else is available to cover. It might be you that spares a grieving family from missing out on precious photos of their baby.

Q: “I’m concerned I won’t be able to control my emotions during a session”.

A: Each session is different. Some sessions can actually be quite lovely as many families smile during sessions and admire their baby while you capture the only family photos they will have. Most families are extremely grateful to our photographers and are so touched that a stranger is willing to come to them in their time of grief to provide them with such a precious gift. Obviously many are very sad and shedding a tear is fine, as long as your emotions do not intrude upon the family’s grief.

Q: “What if I get upset after a session?”

A: Heartfelt has an amazing team of photographers who are always willing to talk and give advice. We have private Facebook groups where members can debrief, share images and ask for advice on editing, processing or any other concerns you have. Heartfelt also provide a free counselling service for members who feel they need to talk to a professional.

Q: “I’m worried about doing my first session and seeing a stillborn baby”.

A: We always try to make sure our members go on sessions with experienced members before they cover their first solo session. That way, if you find a session a bit confronting you can quietly leave the room unnoticed. Members can go on as many as they need until they feel prepared to go on their own. There are always experienced members to help you along the way.

Q: “Will it cost me anything?”

A: Heartfelt reimburses members for expenses for parking and fuel can be claimed if a significant distance is travelled to look after a family. The printing, USBs and delivery provided to families are all covered by Heartfelt.

Q: “Why do I need to pay \$50 membership to volunteer?”

A: The \$50 fee serves three purposes; firstly, each session costs about \$65 to deliver so the membership fee contributes to the cost of sessions. Heartfelt covers the public liability insurance of members while on sessions which is expensive and thirdly, the fee goes a long way to ensure a committed membership is maintained. Each AGM we put it to the members and the overwhelming vote is to keep the membership fee. The membership fee is waived once a member looks after six families in a year.

Q: “Can I volunteer even though I’m not a professional photographer?”

A: Yes. Most of our members are professional photographers but we also have some highly skilled members with a great eye who aren't working photographers. We are always after members with the skill and heart for this work and ask that our members have the equipment and the confidence to work in a vast range of lighting conditions. Heartfelt is also a learning organisation and occasionally hold lighting and information evenings for members to brush up on their skills. Heartfelt have a large pool of skilled photographers who are always willing to share helpful tips and information to other members.

What if your photography could make a difference?



Heartfelt is a volunteer organisation of professional photographers from all over Australia and New Zealand dedicated to giving the gift of photographic memories to families that have experienced stillbirths, premature births, or have children with serious and terminal illnesses.

Heartfelt is dedicated to providing this gift to families in a caring, compassionate manner.

All services are provided free of charge.

Ph: 1800 583 768
www.heartfelt.org.au

heartfelt
giving the gift of photographic memories

A member's experience...

Last night I walked into the maternity ward. I stood outside the door and braced myself. Taking a deep breath I entered the room I knew would be full of grief. The room was silent, except for some gentle whispers and mum's quiet crying. I've walked into these rooms many times in my role as a Heartfelt photographer and every time is just as important as the last.

But what an honour it was to meet that precious little baby with a gorgeous head full of hair, the most perfect little hands and tiny little feet. My job was important. The photographs I took would be the only professional photographs this babe would ever have. So I documented his existence while admiring his perfection. I wanted to capture with my camera proof that he mattered; he was here; he was someone's world and he was loved beyond the lifetime he would never have. It was up to me to capture beautiful images for those who loved him.

I joined Heartfelt four years ago and have photographed far too many precious babies. Yet my only regret is not finding Heartfelt sooner. To say it has been life altering is no understatement. I have met some wonderfully talented and compassionate photographers who I am honoured to call my friends. I have received the most beautiful letters from families, who amid grief that is beyond my comprehension, have written to me to say the images I took are proudly on display in their home. However as people become aware of Heartfelt's services the busier we get. This means our volunteers are overworked or at worst, sessions cannot get covered. We are in need of more volunteer photographers with the skill and compassion to work in these conditions. Yes... it sounds daunting and most photographers I have spoken to say, "I don't know if I could do it".

But... what if you could? What if your skill with your camera could provide THE most precious gift to another parent? What if you could make a difference to someone? To those who think they could, I say, "Be brave. Take a breath and challenge yourself". Yes it is daunting. It's challenging, confronting and sad. It's all of those things. But it is so very rewarding. If you ever wanted to do something meaningful with your camera skills, this could be it. I can no longer imagine not being a member of Heartfelt.

There have been many, many babies I've met in my years as a member. I've shared time with them and their families and I've been honoured to photograph each and every one of them.

We are always looking for members with the heart and skill to join our team. If you think you have what it takes to be a part of our Heartfelt family, please get in touch via the Heartfelt page.

We would love to hear from you.

Ph: 1800 583 768

www.heartfelt.org.au/join_us

"Emma shooting Jasmine's Session" by Angela Jury, Heartfelt

