



**prenatal partners for life**

# Hope



THE NEWSLETTER FOR PRENATAL PARTNERS FOR LIFE

SUMMER 2024

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***And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

**Colossians 3:17**

Dear Friends, Benefactors, and Supporters,

I praise God for the blessings of our 2024 Celebration of Life Banquet! It was such a beautiful evening with so many wonderful and inspirational moments. The beautiful testimonies, the awesome entertainment, the fun and talented Matt Birk, the delicious dinner, and the message about the beauty and gift of all life, made in the image of God, ensured a fantastic night!

From the stirring, life giving prayer and words from Deacon Kris Ringwall to the tremendously talented performance from Dancemania, performers with special needs from Lundstrum Performing Arts studio, the night started off great under the witty and entertaining direction from our incomparable M.C. Matt Birk.

A grateful thank you for the amazing testimonies given: Andrew and Elisa Armstrong shared about baby Peter and Jessie Tieva and Amanda Gust shared about baby Abel. Both of these precious babies had Trisomy 18, and both inspired so much good in the world in the short time they lived. Jeff and Susan Smith, long time advocates and parents of several adopted children with special needs spoke about the challenges families face, miracles, and the gift of every life.

We were incredibly blessed with the brilliantly talented and dynamic trio of Mick Sterling, Cate Fierro, and Rick Carlson. Everyone, young and old, enjoyed the beautiful voices of Mick and Cate and the genius piano playing of Rick. It was an outstanding and thoroughly enjoyable performance, and we are so thankful to them. We could have listened to them all night long!

We are so appreciative to everyone who came to the banquet, all who helped with it, the clergy, the families, the volunteers, all who donated, all who pray, all who support us in any way. Thank you so much!

It can get ugly and hard at times fighting for the truth that all life is precious and a gift from God, made in His image. It seems like people have forgotten about the Ten Commandments and that God is the Author of life. God is love and truth, and all life is a gift to be treasured, nurtured, and helped to reach its full potential. With your continued help, we will continue to offer life-affirming support, information, and encouragement to our families and educate the world that every life has meaning, value, and a purpose!

Praying for an abundance of faith, hope, and joy in Jesus for you and your loved ones.

With deep appreciation and love,  
Mary Kellett



# Family Spotlight

Henryk Kuehn was born with a rare congenital heart defect called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS) where the left side of the heart does not develop fully. Since the chambers on the left side do not develop correctly, the right side must take over all the work and requires multiple open-heart surgeries (typically 3) to try to help the blood flow. In the 1980's these children were called "blue babies" because they didn't have the correct blood flow and have lower oxygenation. Most children require a heart transplant sometime in their life to survive.

Henryk was diagnosed at 20 weeks gestation with a heart condition after noticing he only had a 2 vessel umbilical cord instead of 3. After an amniocentesis was performed, it was determined his condition was not related genetically. At the age of nearly 5, he had additional genetic screening done and it was determined that he actually had a genetic condition called SMAD-2 that caused the heart condition. He also was born with Asplenia (his spleen never developed in utero) and his Heterotaxy Syndrome (organs are not in correct places like intestinal malrotation and aorta on the wrong side). Henryk was very lucky in that he got to skip the first heart surgery which is usually performed the first few days of life due to his specific anatomy. Henryk also was diagnosed with failure to thrive because his heart worked so hard he could not gain enough weight by eating on his own. He required a gastrointestinal feeding tube from birth to be able to receive additional nutrition.

At 6 months old Henryk, became sick with a respiratory illness and was flown emergently to the nearest hospital. He suffered brain damage from lack of oxygen and the doctors told us he would never walk, talk, or get off a respirator based off the images neurology was seeing. He was able to do all those things and never showed signs of brain damage like they said. The neurologist told us he was a miracle, but we already knew that the day he was born.

Henryk was home in-between his 6-month Glenn heart surgery and his Fontan heart surgery at 4.5 years old. In June of 2023, Henryk went to have his final planned Fontan heart surgery but his body did not respond well to the surgery, he developed sepsis, and was placed on ECMO. He was able to come off ECMO and begin working on walking and strengthening his muscles again. There were talks of going home in a couple weeks time. Unfortunately, he developed pancreatitis, which ultimately lead to his passing in November 2023.

During our first hospital stay in the NICU when Henryk was born we met Mary Kellett from Prenatal Partners for Life. She and her non-profit were an incredible blessing to our family when we were being faced with challenging times during Henryk's heart condition journey. From the snacks that helped us keep going day after day during multiple 5 month hospital stays, to helping us with financial grants when Henryk passed away.

The grants helped us to pay for a portion of his funeral costs and for a memorial stone. These grants meant the world to us because when you have a child with a complex medical condition, they don't qualify for life insurance so everything becomes expensive fast. No parent ever dreams they would have to bury their child, let alone be faced with trying to figure out the financials of how to pay to do so. These grants took away some of that burden.

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# Family Spotlight

Prenatal Partners for Life even blessed our 3 other young children with gifts like toys and books to help them through a difficult time in their lives where they had to be away from Mom and Dad for months at a time. The lunches Mary brought us at the hospital provided us a break from the stress of the hospital room. They were a special treat because when you are in the hospital, you usually either skip meals because you have no time to eat with a child in the hospital, or you get to pay high prices at the cafeteria for subpar food.

She prayed with us so many times, sometimes it was right in the middle of a hallway. Those prayers are what held us together and kept hope and faith in our hearts. She was there to see Henryk and pray over him at times when he wasn't able to be awake. She was a support system for us when family couldn't be. After knowing Mary for 5 years and the support she gave, she was no longer just a friend but family. She is a truly incredible woman and a blessing we will cherish forever.

Henryk lived a beautiful life for 5 years with a contagious smile and heart of gold. His sweet personality would bring a smile to anyone who met him. He loved playing with his siblings and loved arts and crafts as well as his favorite movie character Knuckles. He is forever loved, dearly missed, and our hero.



## Our Mission

Prenatal Partners for Life is dedicated to providing families (either expecting or those who have had a child with special needs, health issues, or a life limiting condition) with the support, information, and encouragement they need to make informed decisions involving their child's care.

We believe that these children are unique gifts from God and have a special purpose in life that only they can fulfill. We believe that these children are made in God's image, and that He has a plan and a purpose for every life He creates, no matter how long or short that life may be. We believe that these precious children are a blessing to their families, their communities, and the world.

Our goal is to provide honest, practical information and support by linking expectant parents or new parents with other parents who have had the same or a similar diagnosis for their child. We also strive to educate the world about the unique blessings that these children are. We call them "Teachers of Our Souls."

The support we provide can be given in person, over the phone, by email, or in written correspondence and may include a variety of practical assistance that is based on each family's individual needs.





*Thank you for supporting Prenatal Partners for Life*



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