

I'd like to say a personal thank you to all the people who have been praying for my beautiful little granddaughter, Sophia Rose. Your prayers, thoughts and kind words have been a tremendous source of strength to our entire family. We have discovered that the power of love and prayer should never be underestimated, since Sophie has responded very well to her treatment and is growing stronger by the day. I am not dismissing the medical side of things by the way, but I realise that Sophie was being taken care of by more than the surgeons during her surgery - a comforting thought.

Sophie was born on December 15th, 2006, the first girl on our side of the family for many years. Her condition was discovered a day later by an angel of a nurse, without whose intervention we would not have Sophie today. Sophie has a condition known as Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, in short, the left side of her heart did not form correctly. She was taken to Duke Medical Center in Chapel Hill, N.C. where her sweet little body was immediately hooked up to more monitors than you can imagine. Our elation quickly turned to shock, a condition that remained with the entire family during Sophie's hospital stay. It was explained to my son and daughter-in-law that three procedures would be necessary in order for the heart to function in a way for Sophie to lead a normal life, the first being immediate open heart surgery to place a small shunt in her heart. What an awful thing to hear. No parent wants their perfect, most precious gift to undergo such a thing. But these two, strong, loving people sat by Sophie for about 15 hours each day, reading to her, singing to her and letting her know of their love. Never have I been more proud of my son. When Sophie came out of sedation she responded straight away to the sound of their voices. As I said earlier, never underestimate the power of love.

Sophie came home from the hospital within a month with only a small feeding tube attached through her nose. Now, at four months, she feeds from a bottle completely, laughs, reaches for toys and is a very happy and beautiful baby. However, the time is fast approaching for her second operation and we are all feeling the tension. This next operation is decided upon depending on weight, due to the fact that the shunt is so small it can only be effective for a short time. Fortunately the surgeons consider this a fairly straightforward procedure compared to operations one and three, but to a family without medical training it is still nerve-racking and scary. Operation three will be between eighteen months and three years old.

I find myself shaky and emotional as I relive the last few months, and can only reiterate again how grateful we are for the support given to us by your prayer group and others across the globe. Good people with unknown faces and unheard voices keeping Sophie in their hearts.

Please continue to pray for this little girl . The road ahead, though paved with love, will not always be easy.

With my sincere gratitude - Pauline