



For nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37

LEILAH HOPE

Compatible with our life!

Think of yourself growing and thriving in your mother's womb. Now imagine being killed because the medical community viewed you as "less than perfect" or "not compatible with life." This is exactly the recommendation for babies with the "lethal" condition called Trisomy 18. Trisomy 18 occurs in 1 out of every 2,500 pregnancies and is the second most common trisomy right after Down Syndrome, but because of the poor prognosis, many don't even know about it. Trisomy 18 will occur in approximately 1 out of every 7,000 live births. Despite the poor prognosis, 5-10% of the live born children will live to see their first birthday.

In 2011, my mom received the devastating news that my baby sister had a chromosomal disorder called Trisomy 18. She was offered an "early induction," a fancier name for abortion. We all knew the medical community wasn't going to do any heroic acts to save a baby born at 22 weeks. My mom refused and continued the pregnancy even after being told her own life was at risk. We visited a 3D/4D ultrasound clinic frequently so we could see my sister alive since we were told that she would pass away in utero. At 34 weeks, my parents made the decision to change their birth plan and to remove themselves from hospice. They changed to a new Obstetrician and hospital to give my sister the best chance for a live birth. On December 28th, Leila Hope was born via emergency C-section at 34 weeks 6 days. She was immediately taken to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and placed on a ventilator, but she was here and she was alive.

At 4 weeks of age Leila was transferred to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Milwaukee to get the medical treatment she needed. We were told to take her home to let her die, but we wanted more for her. My mom and dad found themselves in front of the

hospital ethics board having to defend her right to live. I am happy to say that they did agree to treat her if it would improve her “quality of life”. Leila went through a lot during the first nine months, but she thrived and continues to do so. By the grace of God, we will be celebrating her fourth birthday next month on December 28th!

My parents knew that raising a child with special needs would have some challenging times, but nothing could have prepared us for the wonderful blessings that also come with raising a child like Leila. She inspires me and others with her contagious smile and never give up attitude. In today’s society, we are promoting a culture in which human life is disposable. If it’s not perfect, get rid of it and try again. If you took the time to get to know Leila, you would only see innocence and perfection. We have always used the verse “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” Psalm 139:14 for Leila.

I believe that life begins at the moment of conception and “fetuses” can feel pain. My mom shared Leila’s story with Wisconsin Right to Life and it was shared when trying to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. I was there when Governor Scott Walker signed Senate Bill 179 into law on July 20, 2015. I am proud that my parents chose life and have instilled the value of every life in me. My future plans include going to medical school where my views will differ from many. I hope to be a voice for kids like my sister.

References:

Cereda and Carey Orphanet Journal of Rare Diseases 2012, 7:81
<http://www.ojrd.com/content/7/1/81>

URL: <http://www.trisomy.org>, Support Organization for Trisomy 18, Trisomy 13 (SOFT)

NIV Bible (Popular ed.). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Pro-life Gov. Scott Walker Signs Wisconsin Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection act | NRL News Today

<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2015/07/pro-life-gov-scott-walker-signs-wisconsin-pain-capable-unborn-child-protection-act/#.VIDVPITasUU>

Wisconsin Right to Life

<http://wrtl.org/lifevoice-blog/leilas-story/>



Gov. Walker meeting Leila



Gov. Walker signing Senate Bill 179