



Walking Miracle

Andrea

*Age 15 ~ 9th Grade
Creative/Fiction ~ Blog*

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In 2018, Planned Parenthood's breast cancer exams went down sixty-eight percent, its pap tests went down seventy-two percent, and its prenatal services went down seventy-six percent, while the number of abortions went *up* four percent, directly illustrating how abortion is becoming more common than ever. Twenty-five percent of women have abortions because they are not ready for the responsibility of raising a child. Three percent of women have abortions because their baby has a serious health issue. Many times, when these babies are diagnosed with serious health issues, doctors tell parents their child will have a dark future. This statement, however, could not be further from the truth.

Allow me to introduce you to Aaron. When Aaron's parents were four months pregnant, they went into their doctor's appointment excited and happy. They happily chattered about whether they would have a boy or a girl since the day's appointment would reveal their baby's gender. Instead, they received vastly different news. Their baby's prognosis included cognitive impairment, hydrocephalus, paralysis, and dark limbs due to lack of circulation, with a life expectancy of only five years. The doctors predicted Aaron would have a dark and bleak future and suggested it would be best to abort him sooner than later. The diagnosis given was spina bifida and, if aborted, he would have become one of the murdered souls in the estimated three percent mentioned above. Thankfully, Aaron's parents recognized the value of every life and refused to consider abortion regardless of the outcome.

TORNADO OF THOUGHTS

Despite their convictions, as Aaron's parents listened to the doctor's diagnosis, a million things were spinning in their heads, wondering what would become of their lives...

Were their lives going to be turned upside down?

They were a happy family of four with two daughters and lived a very normal life before this news.

Would their daughters have to go to public school?

At the time, they homeschooled their two daughters and wondered if they would be able to keep homeschooling. They loved homeschooling since it was a great fit for their family.

Would they be financially ruined?

They did not know if they would be able to afford the cost of a child with spina bifida. In 2013, the Center for Disease Control, or CDC, estimated that the average hospital costs for a baby born with spina bifida were around twenty-one thousand nine hundred dollars in the first year of life. In 2007, the National Library of Medicine estimated that the average cost of spina bifida patients ages one through seventeen was around fourteen thousand seventy dollars per year. Knowing these realities caused Aaron's family to worry how they could afford these possible new expenses.

Would he be wheelchair-bound his whole life? Would he be able to run or shoot hoops or play football? Would he be able to have an education, or would he be in the hospital his whole life?

The CDC also estimated in the same study mentioned above that around eighteen percent of babies with spina bifida had three or more hospital stays in their first year of life.

If Aaron were going to be in the hospital so much, would he even be able to have friends or have a fun and care-free childhood?

Even though they loved their baby boy, and wanted him to have a life, this news was scary and hard to process...

THE DECISION & THE OUTCOME

Going home they had a lot to process. The doctors had given them info to read about spina bifida, which made things even more overwhelming and scary. They had no idea what to expect. Thankfully, they were, and still are, strong believers in Jesus and knew nothing was impossible for God. They decided to carry Aaron full-term and did not let fear dictate their lives. Instead, they began praying and asking other people to pray for Aaron, as well, since they had a wonderful support system of family and friends. The rest of their pregnancy was filled with prayer and spending time in God's Word, as well as, preparing for Aaron's arrival. Ultimately, the decision to pray would have immediate and long-term effects.

Their faith in God was strong, yet their decision was continuously tested. Every doctor's appointment showed Aaron's case was getting worse despite many people praying for a miracle. Because Aaron's case was so severe, he had to be delivered three weeks early via C-section. Even upon his birth, his back was completely open, and he was immediately rushed to have surgery. Yet, there were many glimpses of hope. Even though he was expected to be paralyzed, as soon as he was born, he would not stop moving, which was already a miracle itself! It was clear God had other plans for Aaron's life.

The first few years of Aaron's life were filled with numerous appointments at the doctor's office and for physical therapy, yet he remained healthy through it all. He kept making progress and defying the odds the doctors had told his parents.

Even though he was much healthier and stronger than expected, he still needed prayer. He still could not walk on his own. Thankfully, his parents, family, and friends kept praying.

Their wonderful support group of people who prayed without ceasing for Aaron made their journey a little easier. While doctors doubted there would be a miracle, Aaron's parents told them they were praying for a full miracle.

MIRACLES & BLESSINGS

During the past thirteen years of Aaron's life, he, along with others, witnessed many of these prayed-for miracles. Doctors predicted he was going to be a very severe case, but each appointment showed more improvements, causing doctors to report he was one of the easiest cases and a "poster child" for spina bifida patients. He has only had three surgeries in total. The first surgery was the day after he was born to place his shunt and close his back. Fifty percent of children have a shunt revision by the age of two. Aaron has his original shunt with no revisions to date. The second was a left tibial rotation, and the third included five surgeries from hip to toe. Most spina bifida patients experience bowel and bladder problems and curves in the spine, but Aaron has not experienced any of these problems, which is another answer to prayer!

Along with Aaron defying the odds of what the doctors told his parents, he has been able to impact others lives with his kind, social, and extroverted personality. He attracts people wherever he goes with his friendly can-do attitude. There are also many times people returned the favor by going above and beyond to show him value and incredible kindness, as you will soon read.

Aaron has always loved football and has wanted to play, so you can imagine the excitement when he was invited by the local football team captains to be the co-captain for the night. Not only was he able to enjoy the fun atmosphere of a high school football game, but he was able to help and support the team during their game. Because of the kindness of the team captains, Aaron was able to experience something he has always wanted to do and make a memory that would last forever.

Most kids with spina bifida are limited in what activities they can participate in. Not Aaron! He has been able to attend the kid's program at their church every Wednesday night, which has allowed him to befriend lots of new people and have tons of fun. These friends have been incredibly kind and supportive of Aaron's journey.

After Aaron's most recent surgery, one of his friends surprised him with a huge gift basket full of his favorite candies, hunting magazines, fun toys, and more. Aaron was so touched by the incredibly kind gift, even he got teary-eyed. He is also into hunting, so the pastor of their church has taken him out hunting a few times. Right now, he is helping Aaron get his bear hunting tags so he can go bear hunting soon. Because of the kindness and support of Aaron's friends, he does not have to go through his journey alone; he has friends who show him the value and kindness he deserves.

Just like a symbiotic relationship in nature, Aaron's testimony has positively benefited all parties throughout. It is plain to see people have not only been able to cheer him on when he has made amazing progress and defied the odds, but they have not stopped supporting him and showing him extraordinary love and kindness. Because of Aaron's social and friendly personality, along with his amazing story, he can easily talk to and befriend kids his own age, as

well as people older than him! With his positive and can-do attitude, he has been able to share his story with countless individuals and be a beacon of hope for many.

Even though doctors said Aaron would most likely be in a wheelchair his whole life and never walk, his parents and many others started praying he would be able to walk before he was even born. Because of their hope and relentless prayer and perseverance, in addition to Aaron's persevering and hopeful attitude, he has been able to walk with the help of a walker and crutches, and even enjoy the fun of running in a local 5K race!

ABORTION IS NEVER THE ANSWER

Although Aaron's family's life has been a bit more different than expected, their life was not turned upside down. Sure, they have had more appointments than a "typical" family, and a few surgeries to boot, but their lives have been able to remain the same. Their daughters were able to remain homeschooled and they have been blessed because they have not been up to their elbows in debt.

From a medical standpoint, doctors gave a bleak and sad sounding future for Aaron's life yet, in his thirteen years of life, it has been quite the opposite! Not only has he had significantly less surgeries than the average spina bifida patient, but he has not spent a considerable amount of time in the hospital. He has been able to experience and do things a kid his age does. He has been able to play sports, go hunting, run in races, and have fun with friends.

Without a Biblical worldview, it is easy to discount all the wonderful things God can do in even the most hopeless sounding situations. Because Aaron's family were and still are Christians, they knew God could do anything, and that He could heal Aaron.

If you compare what doctors were saying Aaron's future was going to be like to what his life has been like so far, the difference is shocking. If he lived past five years, they said he would most likely end up paralyzed and have darkened limbs due to lack of circulation. Because his case was predicted to be so severe, he would have countless surgeries and be in the hospital significantly more than the average person. They also said he would never walk and be wheelchair-bound the entirety of his life.

Today, Aaron *can* walk with a walker and crutches and even run! He is nowhere near paralyzed and his limbs are not dark at all. He has only had three surgeries which is substantially less than the average amount of surgeries spina bifida patients have. He has tons of friends and has been able to enjoy growing up like any other kid his age.

Aaron's testimony can help others choose life. As we have already determined, many people think when their baby has a serious disease, there is no hope for the baby. Without being repetitive, we can say there is *always* hope in any situation, despite the hopeless prognosis doctors may pronounce. The dark, scary predictions are simply predictions. There is always hope for any baby, and abortion will take away the opportunity to display a miracle. Who is to say your child will not have a happy and enriched life just like Aaron has had?

When people love someone who has been born, they do not give up on them and let them die; they do everything in their power to help them recover and become healthy again. We need to have the same mindset not just for people of all ages, but for the millions of unborn babies. Their lives are just as valuable, and they have just as much potential for being healed.

God can do anything for anyone because nothing is impossible for Him. Aaron is literally a *walking miracle* displaying what God can do, that prayers are powerful, and proof that abortion is never the answer.

“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

James 5:16



Resources: 1. “Why Women Have Abortions,” www.wisconsinrighttolife.org/why-women-have-abortions; 2. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Data and Statistics on Spina Bifida,” www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spinabifida/data.html; 3. National Library of Medicine, “Health Care Expenditures of Children and Adults With Spina Bifida in a Privately Insured U.S. Population,” <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17335056/>; 4. Interview of Aaron’s Mother, a local northwestern Wisconsin family. Note: name changed for privacy reasons. Date: March 18th, 2021