



Welcome to Play for a Heart

Your team name is
TEAM THOMAS

Your team is named after
a little boy named **Thomas**.
Here is his story:

Our son Thomas was born on March 30, 2004. He was born by emergency c-section. Very quickly following his birth, we realized that he had a serious problem. He wasn't getting enough oxygen and as a result turned blue and was rushed off the NICU. We were terrified and had no idea what was wrong and what to do. We were very fortunate that his pediatric cardiologist happened to be in the NICU looking at another baby. He examined Thomas and diagnosed him with Transposition of the Great Arteries. This is a CHD where the Pulmonary Artery and the Aorta are reversed, so the blood and oxygen can't mix. Thomas couldn't breathe. At one point his oxygen levels were in the teens. The life flight team took him from Rose Medical Center to The Children's Hospital. Dr. David Miller, the cardiologist who evaluated him in the NICU, performed a Septostomy; he punched a hole in Thomas's heart to get his blood and oxygen to mix. They began administering a drug called Prostaglandin to keep that hole open until he could have the open heart surgery that would ultimately save his life.

The next 10 days were a very scary roller coaster ride. Thomas had originally been scheduled for surgery on his 7th day of life. However, he developed a fever that they could not determine the origin of. They had to postpone his surgery three times. Finally, they decided to do a spinal tap to rule out Meningitis. Fortunately, they did rule it out, and were able to move forward with his Arterial Switch on Good Friday, Thomas was 10 days old. We were able to get to the hospital earlier than normal that morning so that we could spend some extra time

with his before they took him into the OR. I remember feeling completely helpless and terrified at the thought of what could happen. The surgery lasted 7 ½ hours. Each hour, the surgery liaison would come out and give us updates on how the surgery was going. There are no words to describe hearing someone tell you that they have stopped your baby's heart, and now they would take his body temperature down to 32 degrees, so that they could continue. The nurses warned us that he may come out of surgery with his chest still open (in case they had to go back in), or that he may be very swollen. When Francois Lacour-Gayet (his surgeon, his angel) came out to tell us they were finished, and that it had gone perfectly, the relief was indescribable. They took us back to see him, and I thought to myself how wonderful he looked, his chest was closed, and the swelling seemed minimal. I was a bit overwhelmed when I saw all of the tubes, and wires that were coming out of his tiny body, however we recognized our beautiful baby, and his little heart was beating on its own. We were elated. We watched carefully over the next week, and he seemed better with each passing day. The CICU staff had nicknamed him Big Tom, or Bruiser because his weight was wonderful, and he was doing so well. They transferred him to a step down unit one week after surgery, and we spent two nights there before he was released and we got to take him home for the first time at 19 days of life. I have never felt more happy that when we walked in the door of our home as a family. Thomas was off of all medications within 7 days of being home.

Today Thomas is a perfectly healthy 4 ½ year old boy who absolutely loves life, and he is our world. He is completely "fixed" as they say. He will not require any further surgeries. Other than his annual EKGs and Echocardiograms, he will have no other treatments at all. You could miss the scar on his chest if you weren't looking for it. Although, he knows it's there, and he has no problem letting people know that it is where the doctors fixed the boo-boo in his heart when he was a baby. We count our blessings every day and thank God for his heart and for those wonderful doctors and nurses who took care of our precious baby. They are truly angels, and we have our Thomas because of them.