

My first Mother's Day

I found out I was pregnant while I was at my annual physical.

My doctor wanted to run some tests and asked if I was pregnant. I gave the old response 'maybe, who knows?' with a laugh; after all, my husband and I were trying for a baby, but it had only been a month. When she told me it was positive, I was in shock. I was so happy and I didn't have my husband Jonathan there to celebrate with. My doctor laughed at me as I stood up and sat down in my seat, unsure of what to do, and opened her arms for a hug. On the ride home, I stopped off at the store and bought a onesie, sized three months, because after one look at my athletic hubby, I knew our baby would be big!

Six weeks later, the doctors told me there was something wrong with my baby. There were developmental problems in the brain. They didn't know how bad it was. A week later, they told me there was a problem with the heart too. My heart broke as they told me I would likely lose my baby, our little girl. They gave her a one per cent chance of being born alive, they were confident that I would miscarry. When that didn't happen, they were confident I would have a stillbirth. When that didn't happen, they were confident that she wouldn't survive the birth. When I was in labour at the hospital, we turned the monitors off and prayed.

Sarah lived! Jonathan I spent seven glorious days with her. She was absolute perfection from her full head of hair, to her soft lips, to her long legs. We would have been twins, she was my double in every way. Except her eyes, she had her father's eyes. She never got to wear the onesie I bought her. She never got to see the room that would have been hers. We got to take her outside once, we sat on the hospital bench with the sun streaming down and it was one of the happiest moments of my life.

This will be my first Mother's Day. I don't know what I will do on Sunday. I know Jonathan will plan something, a gift from Sarah to me.

I protected my little lady as best as I could. I fought for her. I argued with doctors and nurses and demanded the best treatment I could get. And I am privileged to live in Canada, a country where I have access to the best health care for free.

The best gift I can give to honour my sweet Sarah this year is to help another mother protect her child. That is why I am donating to effect:hope's Protect a Child fund. It provides treatment and vitamin A supplements to kids and pregnant women in Kenya for hookworm, roundworm and whipworm. Plus, all donations are matched three times by the government of Canada, so for every \$1 I give, \$4 goes to the fund.

I hope you will join me in giving Mother's in Kenya a truly Happy Mother's Day.

From one Mother to another, Happy Mothers Day.

Andrea Onley,

Formerly of Caledon