

# Brianca's Story

Born with spina bifida, Brianca Goff continues to defy the odds and inspire others with her unfailing faith

*Written by Brianca Goff | Photography by Irina Kendrick*

Brianca Goff with her parents, Lisa and Brian, and siblings, Christopher and Lucy



In most respects, I am a typical young adult. I am 22 years old and live in Katy with my family. I have a brother, Christopher, 18, and a sister, Lucy, 12. All three of us are adopted. We like to call ourselves an “international family” because my birth parents are from Mexico, my brother’s from the Dominican Republic, and my sister is from California. My parents say we are unique, and that God chose us to be a complete family together.

But I have one more trait that sets me apart from others. I was born with spina bifida.

## Defying the Odds

Being adopted gave me opportunities I may not have experienced otherwise. Because I was born with many complications, I was in the hospital a lot for the first several years of my life. I have experienced many emergencies, surgeries, and hospitalizations in my lifetime, but the first several years were the most critical. The doctors always told me I defied all the odds.

I remember feeling secure in the midst of the scary things happening around me. My mother was able to stay at home full-time and accompany me on hospital visits. When the doctor scared me, I often told him to remember my mom was watching from the other side of the bed. He would laugh, but I was serious. I knew she would make sure they were cautious and make them be gentler if I was in pain.

## Becoming a Texas Family

When I was 9 years old, we moved to Texas from New York because I was having a lot of complications. My dad did some research and found that Texas Children’s Hospital had a lot of pediatric neurosurgeons and specialized in spina bifida. Houston has the largest population of people with spina bifida in the country, so they voted this would be the safest place to raise me.

I began homeschooling so I could see and do a lot of things I didn’t do in New York. We have taken a lot of small trips to explore, and the weather is much easier for me here. We have a strong church family at Kingsland Baptist Church,

and I have more friends than ever before. I feel safe here, surrounded by people who really care about us.

## My Mission Field

I was recently admitted to the hospital in the medical center because I have a wound on my back that won't seem to heal. I ended up staying for five months, and underwent surgeries every two to three weeks during that time. Throughout my stay, I had to remain flat on my back at all times in a special bed. I couldn't even sit up to eat. The surgeries were unsuccessful.

I stayed positive through this experience because I knew I had so many people around me who cared about what I was going through. The nurses would spend a lot of time with me because they felt uplifted in my room. They told me I had a strong, positive spirit and that I made their days better. I had the opportunity to learn about a lot of people's lives outside of the hospital. I believed God allowed me to be there because it was a special chance to experience a mission field. While many of my friends have been able to visit mission fields overseas, I have never been able to do this. When I was in the hospital, I was in a position where people came to me and I had the opportunity to share my faith with them. I told many people about Jesus, and how He is where I get my strength and security. At first they would just kind of smile and not look like they really believed me. Then they would stop my mom and ask her out in the hallway about my remarks. She would confirm that my faith was my own, and that our family has always depended on God. He never lets us down, even if things seem hard for a while.

## A Support for Others

My biggest dream is to have a family one day. I also plan to start volunteering at Texas Children's Hospital with my doctor, working in a special spina bifida clinic for teenagers. It only meets one afternoon a week, and is a brand new program. I will be there to support patients and families as someone who has likely been through everything they are currently experiencing. I am very excited to have this opportunity to help others feel more secure in their lives.

I sometimes get asked what I believe to be the greatest reason I survive in this life. I usually tell them that I believe

Brianca considers her hospital bed her mission field and uses it as an opportunity to minister to others



the biggest reason is God has given me strength to defeat all odds. I believe He uses me in the body He gave me. I believe He can, and does, use my circumstances for His honor and glory. I am proud of who I am. I am a child of God; therefore, I am a strong young woman who loves all people, and I serve God in any circumstance He allows me to be in. **KM**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Katy Magazine would like to thank Brianca for sharing her inspiring story of hope. If you have an inspirational story to share, email us at [editor@katymagazine.com](mailto:editor@katymagazine.com).*