Just One Look

By Contributing Writer Kenzie Stanfield

Photo courtesy of the Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep Foundation

Kenzie and Dusty Stanfield cherished every moment with their second born son Maddox

Baby Maddox opened his eyes one time and looked at his daddy before leaving this earth. Now the Stanfield family finds comfort in helping others.

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

The Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep foundation provides free remembrance photography to parents suffering the loss of a baby. The images they provide can be an important tool in the healing process. For more information, visit nowilaymedowntosleep.org

As I glance over at my sweet, yet feisty 8-month-old daughter, Faith Clare, attempting to engage and entertain her almost 4-year-old brother Deacon, I can't help but smile. Babbles, laughter, joy, and fun fill our house, and it is such a beautiful contrast to what once felt like darkness. This beauty has come forth from the ashes of our sorrow. What an amazing difference 18 months make!

A Life-Changing Appointment

It was a late-September morning in 2007 when my husband Dusty and I, and our 23-month-old, arrived at the maternal fetal medicine doctor. There were a few unexpected complications early in this second pregnancy, but we were anxious to see our precious second son on ultrasound.

After several hours in the office, we reemerged both numb and speechless, feeling that life would never be the same. What was scheduled to be a normal 18-week ultrasound turned into the most devastating news one might ever receive- the child we were carrying was very sick and would face countless obstacles if he even made it to birth. Several anomalies, including slowed growth (IUGR), severe heart defects, hydrocephalus, and choroid plexus cysts, were present on ultrasound but the most prominent was spina bifida. We were immediately taken to speak with a genetic counselor who strongly recommended an amniocentesis to determine if a genetic disorder was affecting our sweet boy. All we could do was pray that the Lord would guide us in whatever was to come and take total control of our son's life.

The Definitive Diagnosis

Two days after that life-changing appointment, we received the doctor's phone call with the definitive diagnosis- full Trisomy 18. I fell apart at the likely fate of our son. Medically speaking, this diagnosis is often considered "incompatible with life." Trisomy 18, otherwise known as Edwards Syndrome, occurs in 1 in 3,000 births. The trisomy takes place at conception when a third #18 chromosome is present, instead of the normal two. Due to the additional chromosome, most systems in the body are affected and under major strain, which often results in a high mortality rate before or right after birth. While termination of these pregnancies is as high as 90%, of those that decide to carry-to-term, only 50% make it to live birth and only 5-10% see their first birthday. Regardless of all this information, carrying to term was our only choice and yet, we knew almost instantly that we wouldn't have much time with our dearly loved baby.

The following weeks and months proved to be some of the most difficult of my life. We prayed so much for peace and joy amidst the tremendous storm and God consistently answered us, not completely removing the fear, but giving us a calm about His plan while in it. Family, friends, and even the blog world surrounded us in love, prayer, and support and although we were facing the imminent loss of our son, we experienced a true peace that surpasses all understanding.

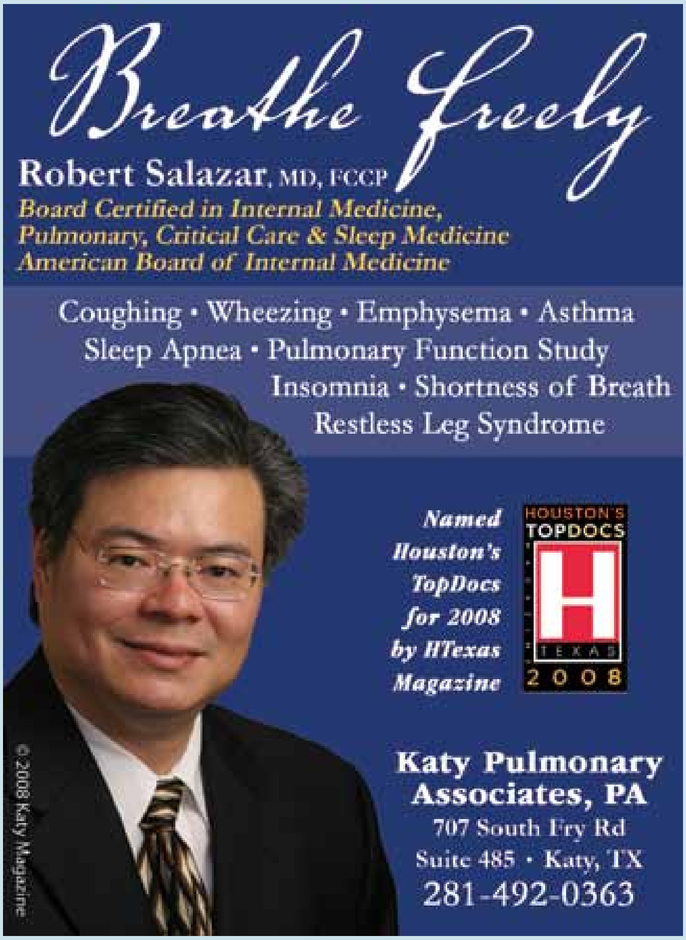

Photo by Suzanne Box

After losing their second born son to Trisomy 18, the Stanfields have connected with other families in similar situations

Support Group for Katy Area Families

The Compassionate Friends (Katy Chapter) meets at Kingsland Baptist Church on the second Tuesday of each month. TCF's mission is assisting families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and providing information to help others be supportive. TCF is not affiliated with any religion.

Visit compassionatefriends-katy.org or email mginter@sbcglobal.net



On January 23rd, 2008, the waiting was over. Our son, Maddox Donald Stanfield was born at 34 ½ weeks gestation, weighing only 3 lbs and measuring 15 inches long. He was born with his eyes closed, opened them once to look at his daddy, and then closed them again to be with Jesus. He never took a breath.

Cherishing the Moment

During those hours following Maddox's arrival and departure, we spent some of the most sacred moments of our life. We cherished the time with our son while praying, crying, taking pictures, and thanking God for him. Our family and close friends spent some intimate time with us, and our oldest son Deacon was able to hold his tiny brother and kiss his precious face. As we prepared to release our son into the arms of his nurse and kiss him goodbye one final time, I cried while holding him tightly, and whispered that we would see him again one day.


Ten months after the loss of baby Maddox, Kenzie gave birth to Faith

Photo by Suzanne Box

A Ray of Sunshine

The time after Maddox's birth and death was terrifying and emotional. I thought about him constantly and felt the tremendous physical and emotional pain of his absence. But slowly, as the weeks and months pressed on, I also began to experience great joy--a joy that could only come from the true Sustainer of Life. The Lord had been leading me to pray for another child, and after a difficult pregnancy and early arrival, we welcomed our healthy daughter Faith Clare to our family in November 2008, just 10 short months after her older brother graced this earth.

Since the Lord has led us on this road, we have found great joy in connecting with other families in similar situations. We strongly support the March of Dimes--March for Babies and have walked the last two years in memory of Maddox and some dear friends' babies. We are also very passionate about the *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep Foundation* and the amazing ministry they have through their infant loss photography. Thanks to their talents, we have beautiful photos of the intimate time we shared with Maddox that will remain as treasured keepsakes until the day we can hold him once again. **KM**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We would like to thank Kenzie Stanfield for sharing her family's story of hope. Katy Magazine has made a donation to the March of Dimes in memory of baby Maddox Stanfield. If you want to help either of the worthwhile organizations mentioned in this article, visit marchofdimes.com or nowilaymedowntosleep.org*

The Stanfield family today - Kenzie, Dusty, Deacon, and Faith.

Photo by Suzanne Box