

One Family's Story



John Hardy Robertson

After learning of their newborn son's heart murmur while in the hospital nursery, Robin and Hardy Robertson never imagined what they would endure as a family over the next year and a half. "John Hardy's heart condition was a complete surprise to all of us, our family, and my OB/GYN," said Robin. "No heart problems were ever detected while I was pregnant and there is no history of heart problems in either family."

However, during John Hardy's follow up visit with the pediatric cardiologist they discovered he was born with Tetralogy of Fallot. Tetralogy of Fallot occurs when the right side of the heart does not develop properly while a baby is in the mother's womb. It is the most common form of cyanotic congenital heart disease and affects one out of every 1000 babies born with congenital heart disease. The initial prognosis was good. Their doctor explained that John Hardy would have to undergo surgery but that it could be repaired and he would live a 'normal' life.

"Hardy and I were devastated of course, the idea of our new infant son going under the knife for open-heart surgery knocked the wind right out of us, to say the least," said Robin. "We relied on our faith to keep us strong and our families were a great source of love and support." The surgery was scheduled for November 2006, just six months after John Hardy's birth. Then in May, prior to his surgery, the doctor found John Hardy's blood/oxygen levels were too low. "The surgeon needed to get into John Hardy's heart and block the hole so the blood that did not have oxygen would stop going out into his body and be directed to where it should be, the lungs first then to his little body," said Robin.

Despite coming three months earlier than planned, the surgery was a success. However, less than a year later, during a check-up, the Robertsons were told that there was an obstruction in John Hardy's left pulmonary artery. During the catheterization to correct the artery it was discovered that the obstruction had caused the pulmonary artery to dilate to twice its size and the pulmonary valve to leak blood back down into the ventricle. As a result, John Hardy would have to undergo his second open-heart surgery in less than a year. The second surgery was again a success and today John Hardy is your typical toddler, with an endless supply of energy and a love of baseball.

Prior to both John Hardy's major surgeries the Robertsons worked closely with the Coastal Bend Blood Center to organize replacement blood drives in the community. "The Coastal Bend Blood Center and its staff have been a God send to us through all of John Hardy's life," said Robin.

"Hardy and I believe we are truly blessed with John Hardy and cherish every moment and achievement we have with him," said Robin. "John Hardy has a great disposition for a little person that has been through so much in his short little life; he is truly an inspiration to us all."



Coastal Bend Blood Center

Giving so that others may live