

Jo's Introduction

Written by Joanne Kjaersgaard.

Hi, my name is Joanne, & my little cherubs name is Ariana. Like Sue, I'm pleased to be involved with the first Oz newsletter for Cherubs. I am lucky enough to be able to say I have a living cherub in my midst, & it's from this viewpoint that I'll be writing on.

A quick overlay of life with Ariana, I'll keep it short. Detected at the first ultrasound with CDH at 17.5wks. 13 ultrasounds & 1 amnio all before 36wks; polyhydramniotic to boot. Born to a room full of Dr's & nurses, Ariana wasn't allowed to take a breath. When she was 2.5hrs old, she was bundled off to surgery that lasted for 2.5hrs. She had stomach, large & small intestine, 1/3rd of her liver & her spleen in her chest, all up there thanks to a hole in her left diaphragm. Her bowel was mal-rotated. Ventilator for 2 days, hospital for 1mth. At 11mths of age, she went back to have her 2nd surgery that was to help her with reflux, that took 2.5hrs under the knife.

Ariana has to share this family with 3 other siblings & conform to life in society (which doesn't always happen)! She still has only one lung & she can't vomit. I've been told that I'm a well grounded girl, some have even suggested that pearls of wisdom have been known to fall from my mouth, I'm not so sure about all of that, but I am sure that to live through a CDH pregnancy & child, then a full term still-born, a lesser person I am not. Living with the wild child (better known as Ariana) day in day out is proof of that!

I'm here to give an insight on living with the knowledge that you are carrying & going to give birth to a baby that isn't healthy & could well die, & everything that goes on thereafter when/if the baby does survive. Getting your head wrapped around all that it involves is no mean feat, dealing with all the emotions that go with the territory & holding it all together for sanity's sake? Breastfeeding, hospital visits, Dr's visits, siblings. I hope it will be of some help to you.