

Twelve years ago our third child **Michael** was born (1991).

'He's very blue' we said to the nursing staff, who assured us that his colour was really quite common and would return to normal quickly. That was Tuesday morning. On Thursday morning the Paediatrician came to see him, and could not find a pulse!

We stood for what seemed hours, watching the cardiologist push the probe of his Echo machine back and forth, up and down. Eventually he stopped, and led us to a seat in his office, "I'll call the children's hospital for you", he said, "You'll need to take him straight to the Intensive care unit who'll get him ready to go to Melbourne where they can operate to help him. I'll have it arranged for you to leave tomorrow."

That was the beginning of our Heart Kid experience. That Thursday afternoon we were given a bag containing all this information about children with heart defects and included information about a support group called "Heart Kids".

Our boy, Michael, is now 12. He has "hyper plastic left heart" (no left hand ventricle - immediate surgery required - with poor prospects) and has had 5 lots of heart surgery, lung operations and lastly a pacemaker. But for all of that, he's remarkably well. He thinks he's very lucky to have been given an electric 4 wheel scooter by Starlight Foundation, to help him get around the very steep town where we live.

We didn't get involved in Heart Kids earlier, but now that Michael's grown and looking for more mature friendships, it has been good for him to meet other kids with similar problems and experiences to his own. As well as his needs, we like to be able to share some of our experiences too, hoping that we can be a help to someone else.



Michael on his scooter with new pup "Miracle"



Michael was presented with a Lions "Children of Courage" award by the Governor of S. Aust. in 2003