



Welcome to Play for a Heart

Your team name is
TEAM JONATHAN

Your team is named after
a little boy named **Jonathan**.
Here is his story:

We were filled with joy following the birth of our first child, Jonathan, a little peanut born at 35 weeks. Our dreams quickly changed to fears as we learned that he had complex congenital heart disease - a combination of misaligned heart chambers with an underdeveloped aorta (the major artery that feeds blood from the heart to the body). Instead of going home from the newborn nursery, we were transferred emergently to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) at The Children's Hospital. Jonathan underwent an initial open heart surgery when he just a couple days of age and his heart was the size of a walnut. He spent 8 hours in the operating room while a couple of incredibly gifted cardiothoracic surgeons reconstructed his aorta and repaired several associated heart defects. Despite the surgery, he was critically ill and spent a month in the CICU receiving mechanical ventilation to support breathing and multiple intravenous medications to sustain heart function and circulation. Fortunately, he received the best care imaginable from a team of cardiac intensivists, cardiologists, surgeons, and intensive care nurses who worked closely together. Meanwhile, we watched, waited, prayed, and hoped. He required a few more procedures before being discharged home from the hospital. We will never forget the day we finally brought our baby home to begin our family. His first year of life was incredibly challenging. He was hospitalized a few more times. And multiple doctor visits and therapy appointments filled our days as we worked hard to keep him healthy while supplementing him with nutrition, oxygen, and medicines.

Jonathan just started kindergarten this week and is a spirited, energetic boy who shares his enthusiasm and joy for life with those around him. While he will still likely require subsequent heart surgeries, he lives life as any other five year old boy. He is learning how to swim, just completed his first season of t-ball and is looking forward to playing in future tennis tournament fundraisers to benefit other children with congenital heart disease. Though we don't know what the future holds in store for him, we know that he is alive and thriving due to the outstanding care provided by the many caregivers associated with The Children's Hospital Heart Institute.

They truly gave us the gift of life.