



SPECIAL THANKS:

- Viz RunMomRun
- State Line (Rug) Hookers
- St. James Academy
- Ascension
- Eagle Scouts



BOW TIES FOR BABIES

2014 BOWTIES FOR BABIES - FRIENDS OF ALEXANDRA'S HOUSE

Our committee is now in its seventh year working together, currently planning our sixth annual gala for this fall. Our primary goal has always been to help ensure Alexandra's House has the funds needed to continue operating so they can continue their very important services to those in need. In order that the greatest amount of money raised goes directly to Alexandra's House instead of to event overhead, we may opt to change locations, date, format

Dear Friends,

Today is one day in a flurry of days in which eight babies were born and seven new families wait. While these unimaginable journeys bring their enormous share of tears and sorrow, more importantly and more often they bring marked profundity. People's hearts are truly transformed where life itself takes on greater meaning. It is hard to accurately or sufficiently articulate how and why these changes occur, though the baby is the vessel, and very often those most affected suffer in silence, thinking too few will understand unless they've been through it themselves. We hear justifiable complaints about the following from families *so commonly*, that we laugh as we collectively make plans *one day* to write a book about "what not to say" when someone loses a baby. These are well-intended comments that,

rather than consoling, evoke pain. They include: "Oh, it was probably for the best" or "At least you know you can get pregnant" or "You can have other children". We always suggest to parents that people really want to help, they just don't know how, so it is up to them to set some guidelines. So for now, if you find yourselves in the presence of someone who will or has lost a baby, and this includes miscarriages, the best thing to do is just be present. Just listen. Don't ask how they are doing. They are sad! There are not lots of answers, in medicine or on Earth. Know I share this with you as we have traveled this journey with our families over these last weeks and will continue to as long as we have life in us, and grace to continue. And even with all our experience, we still look

for answers. We do not get "used to it". We are not "strong" or "objective". Our families remain one of the top five things that propel us to do this work with such fervor every day; their beauty and hope, even in their darkest hours. My words fall short too often so I will end with a poem written by a mother and with my deepest gratitude to you, one of our top fives too, for caring about this sweet mission of Alexandra's House and for allowing us the ability to carry it out. God bless you.

-Patti

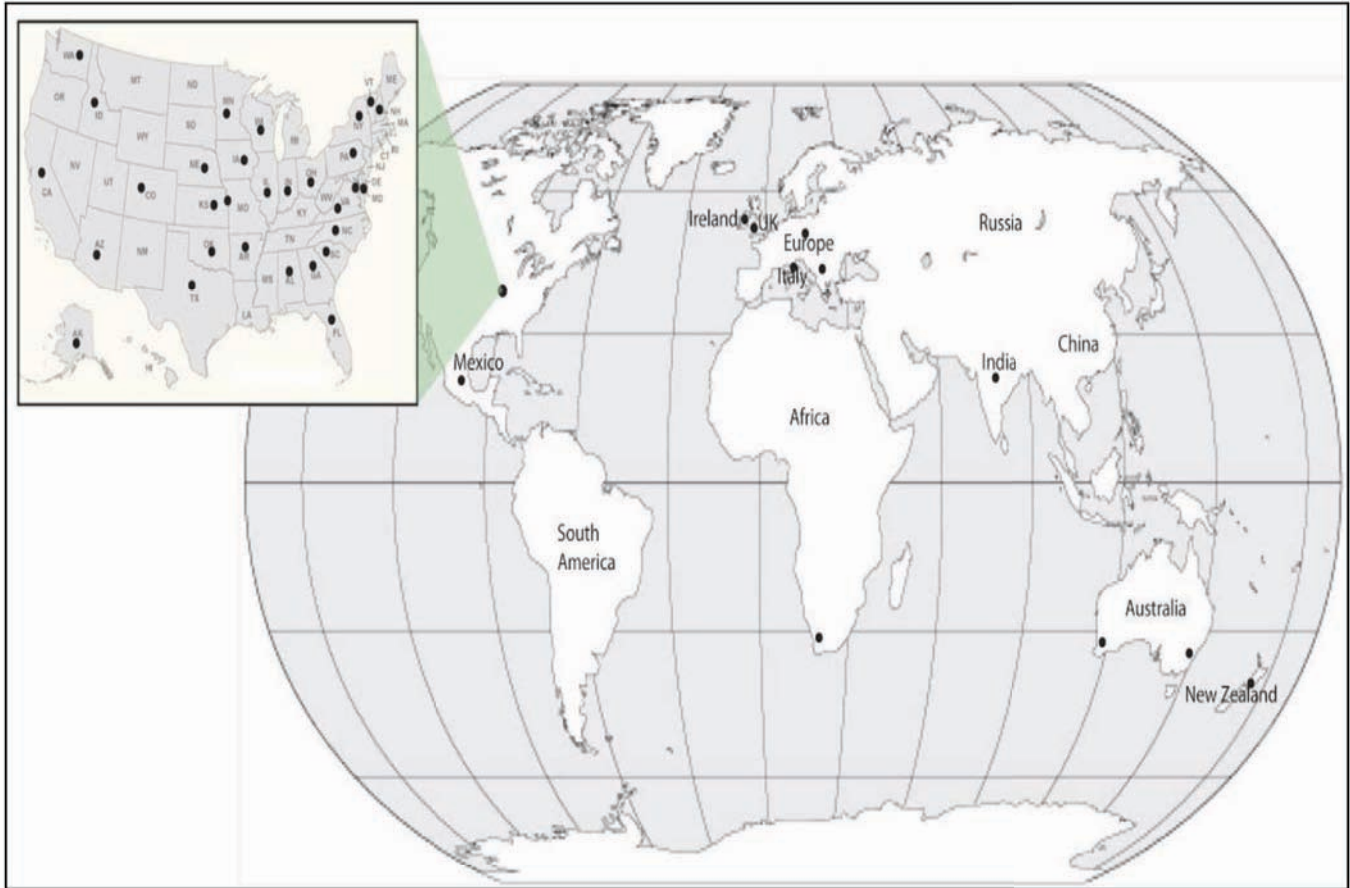
REMEMBERING by Elizabeth Dent

*Go ahead and mention my child.
The one that died, you know.
Don't worry about hurting me
further.
The depth of my pain doesn't
show.
Don't worry about making me cry.
I'm already crying inside.
Help me to heal by releasing
The tears that I try to hide.
I'm hurt when you just keep silent,
Pretending he didn't exist.
I'd rather you mention my child,
Knowing that he has been missed.
You asked me how I was doing.
I say "pretty good" or "fine".
But healing is something ongoing.
I feel it will take a lifetime.*

and so on. This year is taking on a larger venue to showcase AH to a new group of supporters. The gala will consist of dinner, auction and presentation. The Sixth **Bowties for Babies** will be held at the Grand Street Cafe on the Country Club Plaza on Friday, October 24. Friends of Alexandra's House are seeking corporate and private sponsors along with items for the auction such as wine, theater or sporting

event tickets, restaurant certificates, fine jewelry, sports memorabilia, fine art, airline tickets or vacation items. If you would like to donate any of these, please contact 816-931-5378. Tickets may be purchased by visiting bowtiesforbabies.com and clicking on "Purchase Your Tickets Now" or by calling 816-931-5378.

JOURNEY OF A SOUL



Alexandra's journey includes: Alaska, Idaho, California, Colorado, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington State, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Illinois, Texas, Virginia, DC, Indiana, Wisconsin, Maryland, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Arizona. Outside the US: Mexico City, England, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Croatia, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

At Alexandra's House, we are keenly aware that we are simply and joyfully servants! We laugh that we are always scurrying to keep up with a tiny three pound little girl named Alexandra, who from Heaven leads us along her truly life-changing missionary journey. She is our inspiration and our chief. We are her living hands and feet. She leads us to familiar and uncharted territory and allows us the privilege of serving countless individuals across this country and into other parts of the world as they await the births of their special babies. We have served as advisors for those wanting to start similar programs in their communities, have been part of numerous news stories or documentaries, and have spoken of this work at conferences, medical schools, universities, and more—locally, nationally and internationally. We have traveled far, giving freely what we were given for free, receiving even more in return, yet through incredible technology, rarely leave home. It is time to trace Alexandra's footsteps thus far, to document her wondrous mission to help us to build a Culture of Love on Earth.

A D E L A I
BY ROBB AND KARI CRAMER, NORWICH, VT

Early on in our pregnancy, before we knew the gender of our child, our five-year-old son, Andrew, announced, "if we have a baby sister, her name should be Adelai (Ad-e-lay)." My husband, Robb, and I smiled and complimented his idea at the time. We wondered where he had heard that name, but didn't think a lot about it, except that it was unusual and maybe he meant Adelaide, a name we had never considered. As time went on, our son would mention it once in awhile, and our 3-year-old son, Thomas, was, predictably, on board with his big brother's idea. There were no ideas for a boy's name coming up.

In mid-December, an ultrasound at 19 weeks revealed that our baby had multiple abnormalities consistent with the chromosomal condition, Trisomy 18. In January, the diagnosis was confirmed by genetic testing, and we learned the baby's gender at that time. When we told our boys that we were having a baby girl, they both chimed, "let's name her Adelai!" The boys began calling her Adelai. They would say "Hi, little Adelai" through my belly and give her kisses. "Adelai" sounded so sweet and musical when they spoke it and my husband and I found that the name was growing on us.

Curious about the source of this name, I talked to my son's kindergarten teacher but she didn't know anyone at school or a character from a story with a name like Adelai/Adelaide. That evening, after tucking our boys into bed, Robb and I curled up together with the computer and started with a website of Saints, scrolling down from the top a bit to stop at Saint Adelaide; there were two. The first was a Holy Roman Empress, but the second, Saint Adelaide of Saeberck,

touched our hearts. Saint Adelaide of Saeberck, more commonly known as Saint Alice, entered a convent as a child of 7 and contracted leprosy at a young age. The disease crippled her, caused deformities and blindness, left her suffering in isolation, and lead to an early death. My husband and I looked at each other and knew each other's thoughts. We both felt a connection to this young saint and knew we had discovered the source of our baby girl's name: God had revealed His chosen name for His and our little girl through the voices of her big brothers.

We told the boys it was official; their baby sister's name was Adelai Rose ("Of course it is, Mom"). They excitedly announced her name to friends, unprompted by us. We're not sure if they are fully aware of the significance of naming their sister, but they are definitely proud and often express how excited they are to cuddle and kiss their "sweet tiny baby," and talk about what babies do. Andrew matter-of-factly talks about how Adelai will die when she is a baby and won't learn to walk and do other things our friends' babies do, but we can hold, hug, and kiss her, and love her. Thomas says he is "happy about Adelai" and is concerned that we need to get soft fuzzy pajamas for Adelai because she likes soft fuzzy things. He wants Adelai to be born now! While at times, it saddens us to think that some of their excited plans may not become reality; their anticipation of the sweet joy of being with their baby sister warms our hearts. Adelai's name story brings comfort to Robb and I because it reminds us that God is present in the details of our lives and is guid-

ing us with his loving care along our life journey, even in the midst of suffering. (Isaiah 43:1, Psalm 139:13-16)

We recently went for a 4D bonding solo sonogram at the suggestion and arrangement of Alexandra's House. The gal at Ultrasound Innovations in Keene, NH, who did the ultrasound donated her time and services. What a gift!! It was an amazing, though somewhat bittersweet, experience that we shared as a family. Andrew especially was excited--even the days leading up to it--and took something away from it all. It was fun and beautiful. For Robb, especially, it meant so much to connect with his living baby girl, which is harder for a Dad of course to connect to the living nature/reality of the baby during pregnancy. We both walked through some more grief of the expected loss of our baby girl--but we did it together and had great, productive conversations, so even the sadness from the experience bore good fruit. We feel so blessed to have been able to do that and see her.

Afterwards, we stopped at Target to see if we could track down a soft/fleecy type of sleeper or something for Adelai at Thomas's request, but even the clearance racks are empty of that sort of thing by now, so Thomas was truly disappointed by the thought that we might not find what he wanted. Looking at all the baby clothes and gear was almost torturous, for Robb also.

I held up one sweet little sleeper, and it was hard for both of us, we were just reminded of what we are most likely going to be missing, that we are not going to be able to raise our little girl

and watch her grow up. This weekend I was considering what flowers to put in her gravesite arrangement.

Instead of other preparations for my little girl, the one thing I will be able to pick out for her are the flowers for her gravesite. Life was feeling a bit unfair.

Then an unexpected package arrived from Alexandra's House with adorable outfits for Adelai, addressed to the boys, and the timing couldn't have been more perfect. I wish I had recorded Thomas. He was so excited about the bunny sleeper in particular!! He said "Mommy, look, bunnies!! Their noses are little hearts, and feet are bunnies, look at their ears, and feel it--it's so fuzzy!" He put his cheek on the sleeper and said: "This is so soft!! This is perfect for Adelai! This is just what I wanted!" I explained where they came from and that the clothes are for them to give to Adelai. Thomas felt so proud about that. Andrew thinks the people at Alexandra's House all are the nicest, kindest people (which they are). This was such a beautiful gift for me too, not only were my boys excited, and Thomas' wish fulfilled, I was excited too! I was paralyzed to get clothes for Adelai, for so many reasons. The package from Alexandra's House brought so much joy to our day. It was fun! I welled up inside. My cup overflows.

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A D E L A I , C O N T .

Alexandra's House thoughtfulness and generosity and love are such a gift. We are so thankful to have AH in our lives and to have their help and support. They are such a blessing and have brought so much beauty to our family's journey. Thank you!



The Cramer Family: from left: Robb, Thomas, Kari, Andrew and Adelai Rose's 4D sonogram.

D R E S S W I T H A P U R P O S E

The relevancy of the timing of their visit was unknown to most, but it was a *big* day for us: January 26th – the anniversary of Alexandra's death. A very special collection of wide-eyed, wondrous teens made our day as they made their long trek from Easton, Kansas to Alexandra's House to donate their time and service to an afternoon project. Each one is a member of Happy Hollow 4-H Club and/or Army of Christ Youth Group from Saint Lawrence Church in Easton. Their Service Day included touring Alexandra's House and then meeting with Darrell and Jill Pulliam, who spoke of their journey with Champ, their firstborn baby, who had a fatal birth defect called anencephaly. Champ's life inspired his parents to create, lead, and name a project, Champ's Wee Care Packages, in his honor. These packs contain personal and memory-making items and are given for free to hospitals and distributed to patients whose babies die unexpectedly at birth. The group spent hours creating 50 of these comfort boxes.

The volunteers reported feeling that their efforts would make a big "difference" and that it was an "honor" to build the boxes, knowing that each one would help comfort a family. They also reported feeling "inspired" and that Alexandra's House was so "peaceful".

Maybe it was a coincidence but just a few months later, a woman presented a unique request to Alexandra's House. Diagnosed with a serious illness, her response was a desire to serve others. She wished to donate her wedding dress to Alexandra's House so it could be disassembled and repurposed into special gowns for our little babies. As this year will mark her 30th wedding anniversary and, never having had children herself, the thought of her gown dressing our babies held great meaning. Barely had the dress been delivered and a request for sewing volunteers circulated that members of this same youth group immediately asked if they could help with this special task. One of the parents remarked: *"These kids were moved and touched by their visit that day and when I sent out your email about the gowns, even the boys were ready to jump in the car and hit garage sales and thrift stores to find dresses!!!"* One of the boys stated: *"I have a two year old niece and I can't imagine how devastated my family would have been if she hadn't been born healthy. Alexandra's House does a great service by helping the families through one of the most difficult times in their lives. I am proud to help do my part for Alexandra's House and the families that need it's services, even if that includes cutting out patterns and learning to sew! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of such an important organization."*

We are excited to get started and are so inspired by and grateful for these strong, young leaders. Their gowns will dress future little saints!



Above: A picture of one of the beautiful gowns.
Below: Happy Hollow 4-H and Army of Christ Youth Group.

Below: Front row L to R: Alyssa Hutchens, Marie Dean, Jenna Werner and Maura McLendon.

Back row L to R: Noah Tattershall, Jared Schmalstieg, Hunter Dean, Connor McLendon and Blake Hadley.



SOROPTIMIST: ON A MISSION

As part of an international organization whose mission is to help improve the lives of women and girls, Soroptimist is such a wondrous blessing to Alexandra's House (AH). Soroptimist works on an international, national and local level, and aims to be aware of issues women in their community are facing. The Kansas City chapter, founded 88 years ago, has 55 members—ages ranging from 25 to 95 years old.

Several years ago, Patti Lewis, founder of AH came to speak at a Soroptimist meeting. The group was instantly taken with what she shared and knew this organization was one they wanted to help. The projects started with a remodel of a bathroom and the purchasing and stocking of a freezer for the guests of AH. Since then, AH, after applying for a grant through Soroptimist, has become the recipient of two other special projects, that are currently in the process of being completed.

Leah Winkler, owner and founder of Dreamwood Murals, started her career in graphic design. Leah's mom, Nora Magee, is a Soroptimist. When Leah heard of the potential need at AH, she jumped right in. Leah creates and paints beautiful murals on the walls of children's rooms—her incredible and inspirational murals now adorn the four walls of the "Siblings Bedroom" at AH. This room provides children the ability to walk into a fairytale room feeling loved, comfortable and safe. While doing her murals at Alexandra's House, Leah felt an immediate connection with Patti, and realized the profound impact Alexandra's House

had on life—hers and so many others. AH is so thankful for these generous gifts of time, talent and beautiful imagery—gifts that would not have been possible without Soroptimist.



Above: Two of the beautiful wall murals in the Siblings Bedroom, provided by Leah Winkler of Dreamwood Murals.

Laura McCroskey, owner of McCroskey Interiors, a full interior design business, has been involved with Soroptimist for a little under two years. Laura is passionate about her community and giving to causes in need. She found out about Alexandra's House through doing work for another not-for-profit in Kansas City. Laura's hours, materials, labor and design work were all part of the services provided by Soroptimist. Specifically, Laura sponsored the "Parents Room" at Alexandra's House and has remodeled and redecorated it to be a more welcoming, positive and light space. Taking a queue from AH's already bright and positive decor, Laura continued this

look throughout the remodel.

Thanks to this project, the room is now brighter, comforting and creates a warm feeling upon entering. Laura has enjoyed working on this project, knowing that the end result is providing love for families, and a home away from home. This new room will give families staying there a sense of comfort, security and positive energy, and perhaps most important - love.

Thank you to the Kansas City Soroptimist chapter for providing these amazing gifts to Alexandra's House. And, thank you to Soroptimist as a broader organization—assisting in the lives of women and children—one mission at a time.



Above: The remodeled Parents Room provided by Soroptimist Laura McCroskey of McCroskey Interiors.

Questions, comments or if you wish to unsubscribe, please email us at alexandrashousenews@gmail.com.