

# On The Cover

## Faith & Perseverance Ashtyn's Story



By Melanie Fritz

***So much of what I have learned over the past three and a half years has shown me the true meaning of love, family, sacrifice and friendship. My eyes have been opened in a way that I would have never known--had these unforeseen circumstances in my life and family had not occurred.***

It has been through these trials that I have learned to accept the harsh realities of life and depend on my Lord and Savior for comfort.

It was through the birth of my third child that I realized just how precious life is and how in the blink of an eye--our lives can change completely. On July 7, 2004 I underwent an emergency C-section after my doctor realized that I had a complete placental abruption--meaning, that my placenta had completely detached from my uterus. I was hemorrhaging internally, and there was no transfer of oxygen between mother and baby due to the fact that she was also completely detached from her umbilical cord while she was still in my belly. She was in my uterus for at least 2 minutes and 32 seconds without any oxygen. My doctor told me the next day how humbled he was to have been a part of God's master plan. I felt such mixed feelings--feelings of joy, along with feelings of unworthiness. Why would God spare my life and my baby's life when He didn't have to? So many feelings overwhelmed me, but mostly I was just grateful for the sweet blessing that He gave to me. Never had I felt such love and completeness as we now had that picture perfect family that I had always wanted.

My husband Eric and I had prayed for three years for the sale of the

condo that we were living in, because we had just outgrown it. Well, just three weeks after Ansley came home

from the NICU we had an offer on it. Although we never really quite understood God's timing in this particular situation, we did not question Him we just rejoiced and gave Him all the glory and praise for this answered

prayer. We did not close on the sale of our condo until September, but it gave us time to pack everything up and find a place to live while the house that we had always wanted was being built.

Before we moved out of the condo, our oldest daughter Ashtyn who was only five at the time, had suffered her third bout of strep throat in the three weeks leading up to closing. After a consult with her ENT he scheduled a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. Her surgery took place on August 11, 2004. With everything else going on, Ashtyn was also due to start kindergarten. She had to miss the first two weeks of school due to the recovery process of the surgery. But, on Au-

would turn out to be such a treasured memory for both Ashtyn and me. At this same time we closed on our construction loan and began the process of building our house in Patriot Hills. Just four weeks after Ashtyn started school we moved into the house we found to rent while we were in the process of building. This

house that we had found had been such a blessing. We loved all of our neighbors and for the first time our children had a yard to play in and kids that lived next door that they just adored. Now, with our three children--Ashtyn (5), Camden (almost 3) and Ansley (4 months) - We felt like our lives just couldn't get any better. Well, just two weeks later I started to

notice that Ashtyn just wasn't herself. In a four week period, she complained five different times that her heart hurt. And three times in the midst of those four weeks she woke up in the middle of the night crying of leg pain. Well, our first thought was that she was experiencing growing pains. But, the more I studied her behavior I began to realize that something was just not right about her. Her sense of well being just wasn't there anymore. I began to notice how tired she was all the time and how she would just watch as the other kids played. I would pack her lunch for school and she would return it home just like I had packed it. She would shoot up a temperature of 103.5 rather quickly, with no apparent symptoms of anything else going on, but it would be gone the next day. I began to notice the bruises that never seemed to go away. So many people told me not to worry because her behavior was probably due to all the changes that had gone on in our lives causing the changes in Ashtyn. I am so thankful that I did not accept that. Mamas

know their babies like no one else! On Tuesday October 26<sup>th</sup> I picked Ashtyn up from school and was heading home when out of the blue she said, "Mommy, I think that I am ready to get saved." I was merely

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# ASHTYN

gust 20, 2004 she had her first day of school. Miss Amy at Piedmont Elementary let me stay with Ashtyn all day. In the case that she started feeling bad I could take her on home. Little did I know then that that day