

2019 Heart for the Disabled

Join us as we celebrate, love, and encourage five special needs families selected for our “Heart for the Disabled” project. Our goal is to surprise each one of these families with greeting cards, notes, Bible verses, pictures, gift cards, drawings... all to encourage them in the name of Jesus. Below are brief descriptions of each family and their needs.

Ryan, Brittany, Juliete (13), Audrey (11), Brook (8)

Brittany, her husband, Ryan, and their three beautiful daughters, Juliette, Audrey, and Brook, need our encouragement. Brook is nonverbal and has multiple disabilities, including cerebral palsy, developmental delays, a visual impairment, and non-stop, life threatening seizures. She takes a medication to control the aggressive seizures, but these medications have the devastating side effect of damaging Brooke’s vision in both eyes, slowly destroying the retina and causing cataracts. Their daily life stressors are reflected in Juliette’s migraines, and Audrey’s struggle with anxiety.



Josh, Emily, Addie (7), Gracie (5)

Josh, a military veteran working for USPS, and Emily, a stay-at-home mom, are loving parents to Addie and Gracie. Addie was born with medical issues requiring several surgeries. She has a type of cerebral palsy, a sensory processing disorder, and is mostly nonverbal. Then this past year, just after purchasing their first home, Emily, the rock of this family, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She is often fatigued and suffers from debilitating migraines that last for days, which makes caring for her family a challenge.

Jeri Payne

Jeri attended Joni and Friends earliest Family Retreats with her four sons. Zach had an unusual neuromuscular disease which eventually took his life. Then, unexpectedly, her son Sammy died in 2004. During that season of grief, Jeri became a wheelchair user due to a neuromuscular disease. Shortly after this major life change, her husband of 31 years abandoned her. Then when Jeri relocated to Oregon with another son, he died of a cardiac arrest. Jeri now lives life as a wheelchair user and her remaining son, Elijah, is her caregiver. Through all this loss and transition, Jeri holds tightly to a persevering faith in Christ.





Kelly, Rebecca, Colton (11)

When Kelly and Rebecca became empty-nesters, they adopted two children from an orphanage in China. Claire had heart and liver disease, pulmonary hyper-tension, and needed oxygen 100% of the time. Colton is blind in one eye, has an orthopedic impairment, and a heart defect. This past summer they attended their first Family Retreat offering both Claire and Colton friendship and fun. A few months later, Claire required a necessary but high risk

surgery that she did not survive. This family needs our encouragement during this time of loss and disappointment.

John, Tracy, Aiden (16), Miles (12)

John and Tracy are parents to Aiden and Miles, teenage boys who are on the autism spectrum. Aiden is high functioning, but often struggles to fit in with kids around him in high school and longs to connect with others. Miles does not communicate verbally and he is often frustrated by his inability to connect with his family and the few friends he has at school. Amid the routines of life with autism, medical bills, and challenges at school, Tracy was diagnosed with breast cancer requiring a double mastectomy. She is now receiving chemotherapy and John is carrying the responsibility of caring for the boys, his wife, and their home.



Please mail all notes, gift cards, poems, etc. to:

Attn: Heart for the Disabled
Joni and Friends
PO Box 3333
Agoura Hills, CA 91376

Financial gifts can be made by check to Joni and Friends: Christian Fund for the Disabled. In the memo line, please indicate Heart for the Disabled. Specifying a family with your gift serves as a recommendation towards the distribution of funds. All financial gifts are non-refundable donations made to Joni and Friends.

In order to respect the privacy of each family, we cannot provide additional information, such as mailing addresses or phone numbers. There is no deadline for sending your notes of encouragement. We will sort through the gift items and mail each family its package of cards and gifts, with the first package to arrive on Valentine's Day, February 14.