

Gilbert was born with a severe congenital heart defect. He was diagnosed during my 20 week ultrasound. Needless to say, our lives were changed forever that day. CHD's (congenital heart defects) are the #1 birth defect, affecting 1 in 110 babies. There are over 40 different heart defects and CHD's claim more lives every year than all childhood cancers combined. Research for CHD's is grossly underfunded.

Gilbert's diagnosis is Double Outlet Right Ventricle with a hypoplastic left ventricle. He had his first open heart surgery at just 6 days old. In this procedure, they placed a band around his pulmonary artery to adjust the pressures in his heart. He had his second open heart surgery at 5 months old. This procedure is called the Bi-directional Glenn was done. His pulmonary artery was disconnected from his heart and attached to his lungs. Then his superior vena cava was attached to his pulmonary artery. This allows the blood to passively flow from his SVC directly to his lungs to get oxygenated, rather than through his heart to his lungs. His third open heart surgery called the Intra extra cardiac fenestrated Fontan, was done in June 2015, when he was 2.5 years old. In this procedure, the surgeon placed a small conduit through a portion of his right atrium and attached it to his inferior vena cava and pulmonary artery. They also placed a small hole or fenestration in the conduit to help the body adjust to change in blood pressure throughout his body. Essentially, Gilbert lives with a half a heart. The blood that would typically go through the heart and then to the lungs to get oxygenated, now flows passively to the lungs to get oxygenated and bypasses the heart completely. This is so the heart does not have to work so hard.

Gilbert has been doing great and looking at him, you would never know what he's been through. Yes, he does get out of breath faster than typical children but otherwise he's thriving and is a happy 3.5 little boy. Many children with CHD also have developmental delays and the largest one for Gil has been his speech. He is enrolled in a reverse inclusion Pre-K class at school and has been thriving there also. We've seen improvement in his speech already.