

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-4343 (925) 944-5351

E-Mail: callife@calright2life.org

Web Site:

www.calright2life.org

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Bright future for leukemia girl after stem-cell transplant

By Gareth Rose

Courtesy of the Edinburgh Evening News

Every time three-year-old Bethanie Thomson looks at her little brother, she will be staring at the boy who saved her life. The young leukemia sufferer is recovering after receiving a life-saving stem cell transplant from her baby brother – without which she would have faced certain death.

Now she is taking her first steps on the road to recovery and, although she still requires 15 different types of medication and regular trips to the Sick Kids hospital in Edinburgh, and Yorkhill in Glasgow, the future is looking bright – thanks to seven-month-old Joshua.

Her dad Stuart Thomson, 31, said: "The bond between her and her brother is just amazing. We've always told Bethanie what a special boy he is and what he has done for her. They're like two peas in a pod and I have never seen her look so healthy.

"She has even been able to go on rides at a funfair, which she's never been able to do before. That was so nice to see.

"There's a whole new world out there for her now, and that's all because of Joshua.

"She's still not able to stand – the doctors are looking into that – but we stand Joshua in front of her as motivation because she wants to teach him to walk.

"In many ways he is like her big brother – a mini version."

Bethanie was diagnosed with leukemia when she was just six months old. She bravely fought her way through it, started to learn to walk and was looking forward to a normal childhood when she relapsed aged two – just before Joshua was born on Boxing Day.

When doctors told her parents, Stuart and Vicky Thomson, from Wallyford, East Lothian, that cells from the umbilical cord were a perfect match making them suitable for a transplant they could not believe it.

Stuart said: "I didn't really think it would work – I always had doubts. When it did work it took a few days to sink in.

"There was the possibility of a lot of side-effects afterwards, but Bethanie has breezed through it, she's really done well."

The operation itself happened in June, around the time of Bethanie's third birthday, and for safety reasons Joshua was not allowed in her hospital room.

Her parents would hold him at the door window and she would hold up pictures she had drawn for him to see.

With Bethanie undergoing such intensive treatment, Joshua has spent much of his short life in hospital waiting rooms, and the bubbly young lifesaver has become a favorite with nurses.

Stuart said: "He is a lovely little boy. All the nurses love him and give him lots of hugs."

Taking blood rich in stem cells from the umbilical cord is still a relatively new procedure. But experts believe future medical advances will lead to stem cells being used to treat illnesses such as Alzheimer's.

LIBRARY CORNER
THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY
BY JANET E. SMITH



Reviewed by Camille Giglio

Good things come in small packages; so the saying goes. This seventy-five-page book, with an excellent foreword by Robert H. Bork, is without a doubt the most comprehensive little report detailing the slippery slope of contraceptives to euthanasia and stem cell research that I've read in my 33 years of prolife work.

This book is essential reading for an understanding of what Pope John Paul II meant by the "Culture of Death." It was not just a handy little phrase. We have, as a society, come to accept a distorted understanding of rights which, in turn, has led to accepting that "what are properly crimes have been converted into rights," as revealed in *Evangelium Vitae*.

Though an emphasis on personal freedom and liberty has been a part of the American psyche from the beginning, it took a sad downward turn beginning with the passage, in 1965, of a U.S. Supreme Court Decision entitled *Griswold v Connecticut*. That decision, which overturned a 1873 Comstock Law, legalized the distribution and use of contraceptives. It became a matter of personal rights and freedom overpowering a right to life itself. If married couples could place personal satisfaction over procreation why not everyone else? If personal satisfaction was okay for some why not for everyone? Then if pregnancy was a burden and a punishment to be avoided why not abortion as a right? And so forth until we are now on the brink of seeing a way to the elimination of the ill, aged and infirm through direct actions because they too become an obstacle in exercising the right of personal liberty and freedom.

For anyone wishing to understand how and why a society would accept evil as good and selfishness as a right I recommend this book.

The author, Professor Janet E. Smith holds the Father Michael J. McGivney Chair of Life Ethics at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. She is the editor of *Why Humanae Vitae was Right: A Reader*. She is serving a second term as consultant to the Pontifical Council on the Family.

A Right to Privacy is published by the National Catholic Bioethics Center and Ignatius Press.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(For the latest information, see www.calendarforlife.org)

40-Days for Life Nationwide (Worldwide) September 24 through November 2

The fall campaign of 40-Days-for-Life begins SEPTEMBER 24 and continues until right before election day, ending NOVEMBER 2 the Sunday before America goes to the polls to elect new national leaders — a **crucial** time for people of faith and conscience to join together in a massive, unified effort of prayer, fasting and peaceful action. Over 170 cities have committed to this prayerful action to end abortion in America, through prayer, fasting and vigil at local abortion mills.

For more information, and to locate a campaign in your area, see <http://40daysforlife.com> or contact this office and we will assist you in locating the closest campaign in your local area.

Now is the time to reflect and pray on how you can be involved in the largest grassroots effort to end abortion in America. Is God calling you to join others in vigil and prayer outside a local abortion clinic? Are you called to join in the fast for life? Even if there isn't a prayer vigil location in your area, you can join the campaign through daily prayer e-mail your e-mail address to callife@calright2life.org and we will add you to the prayer support distribution list.

LIFE CHAIN

<http://www.lifechain.net/>

October is Life Chain month. Life Chain is a peaceful, prayerful public witness by Pro-Life Americans, standing for one hour along a busy thoroughfare holding signs and praying for our nation and for an end to abortion. It is a visual statement of solidarity by the pro-life community that abortion kills children and proclaims the sanctity of life from the moment of conception.

Signs proclaim "Abortion Kills Children," "Adoption - the Loving Option," "Jesus Forgives & Heals," "Lord, Forgive Us and Our Nation," "Abortion Hurts Women," "El Aborto Mata Ninos," "Life - the first Inalienable Right" and "Pray to End Abortion."

Visit the Life Chain website <http://www.lifechain.net/> for date and time of a Life Chain near you.

Election Day – Tuesday November 4, 2008



Last day to register to vote in California is Oct. 20

Any qualified voter may vote by mail. Applications are printed on the sample ballot every voter receives (on the back side of polling place form).

Mailed ballots must be received by county elections office by close of business on Election Day. Ballots may also be returned in person to the voter's polling place.

Around the Office

Progress on Stone Soup –As always, a big “THANK YOU” to all our donors, especially our monthly donors. Your contributions allow us to continue mail tables, distribute this newsletter, be available for phone counseling for women considering abortion and families considering end of life issues, and assist students doing research projects relating to life. In the first half of 2008, less than 20% of our membership were active donors. Can we increase this percentage?

The recent economic downturn has lead to a deficit through most of 2008. We currently have a deficit of almost \$2,000. We would like to continue working on our key projects; however, without the financial resources you provide we may not be able to continue many of our projects.

Can you spare a few dollars to allow us to proclaim the message of life, from single-cell stage to natural death? All donations, large or small, are gratefully accepted and prayerfully put to good use in the cause of Life. And as we detail in our box at the end of every newsletter, all donations are tax deductible.

Donation Update – Credit Cards Accepted

We now have an option for credit card donations through the Local Independent Charities website. If you are interested in considering this method of donating, please contact our office for further information and instructions.

United Way/Combined Federal Campaign etc.

The annual United Way/Combined Federal Campaign and other workplace payroll deduction charity drives will be having kickoffs in the next couple of months. Consider donating through payroll deduction is a wonderful way to support the cause of life.

Please remember California Right to Life Educational Fund when allocating your charity dollars. Each year we experience a “summer slump, and it has hit us especially hard this year as we continued to expand through promoting projects like the “Safely Surrender Your Baby” project.

Your dollars allow us to be a voice for life in the culture of death. We continue to support various groups with materials for information tables at shopping malls, county fairs and church ministry fairs. Without your support we will be unable to continue to provide our dedicated volunteers with pro-life materials.

Mall Table Volunteers Needed - Does your local shopping mall have a pro-life information table? Are you being called to start one? Several of our committed volunteers now have information tables for life at local shopping malls and county fairs. For guidance on how to get the required permission to have a table, contact our office. Wherever the public gathers is a good place to consider setting up a “Table for Life.”

Newsletter Articles Welcomed - We are also looking for people interested in writing articles for our newsletter. Have you experienced a life affirming activity in your area that you would like to share with our members? Have you written a poem or piece of prose you would like to share? Students – have you recently written a research paper that you would like to share? Send any articles to callife@calright2life.org and we will contact you about including it in a future newsletter.

Prayer Vigils at Local Abortion Mills - Does your local abortion mill have a prayerful presence, especially when abortions are taking place? Are you called to be a prayerful presence, or a “community service announcement” by holding a sign, to let your neighbors know that abortions are happening right in your neighborhood. So many people don’t realize abortions take place in the suburbs. Recently I was standing outside a local abortion mill and a pedestrian came up to me and commented, “I thought abortions only took place in the inner city. I didn’t realize abortions are done this close to

the high school.” Let your neighbors know, the killing is happening in their backyards!