



Jacob Poulin, age 1

Suffering from several cardiovascular malformations

ENFANT SOLEIL FROM THE OUTAOUAIS

Thousands of children are born with and live with medical conditions that threaten their survival. Each year, you are invited to be part of the mutual aid and support movement that allows these young people to hope for a better future. Jacob is living proof that little miracles do not happen on their own.

In late October 2017, an ultrasound performed at 24 weeks of pregnancy revealed that Jacob was suffering from cardiovascular malformations. For parents Catherine and Jean-Pierre, the announcement was devastating. They faced a heartbreaking choice: continue the pregnancy or terminate it. Filled with hope, they chose to give their little one a chance and to give life a chance... A few months later, Jacob was born at CHU Sainte-Justine where a cardiology team was expecting him. The baby's left ventricle and mitral valve were smaller than normal. Two options were considered: rebuilding his heart in a single ventricle or waiting and, once again, trusting life. An ultrasound performed at 10 days old revealed that his heart dynamics were conducive to conserving both ventricles. The choice was made to operate only on what was urgent. So, at 12 days old, he underwent an open-heart surgery to rebuild the aortic arch, suture a hole between the two ventricles and close the arterial duct. It was a major surgery that would require a long convalescence, but against all odds, he recovered in a few weeks. "The little Opération Enfant Soleil logo was there on the machines

that helped save our son's life. We now understand all the comfort that a simple logo can provide at moments that are so hard, like this one!" His mom tells us.

Jacob returned home a month after his birth where his big sister Léa-Rose gave him a joyful welcome. As he was closely monitored over the next months, good news kept on coming. The left ventricle was growing and soon reached the desired size. A membrane that was threatening to obstruct the mitral valve, which was still too small, seemed, on the contrary, to be allowing Jacob's heart to improve. The spectre of another open-heart surgery was again pushed back; his visits to the cardiology unit even became less frequent. The specialists call him the "little miracle," and the toddler's health has proven them right.

Jacob's family joins us in thanking you for being there for him and all sick children in Quebec.

Catherine Desmeules, Jean-Pierre Poulin and Léa-Rose

Little miracles don't happen on their own...

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