

On 12/1/19 at 9:50am, it was 2 years since Owen took his last breath. His birthday, was also the day he returned home to Heavenly Father. My beautiful angel, who I had carried for 34 weeks, prayed for 4 years, and dreamed about for 29 years... died just moments after having been born. I didn't get to hear him cry, see his eyes open to see his mom and dad adoring him, or experience anything that I had dreamed up for him.

Before we got pregnant after trying for about 3.5-4 years. After the first 2 years, we decided to go see a doctor and find out what was going on. They eventually referred us to a local fertility clinic (Utah fertility clinic in Pleasant Grove). First, I had to have a water ultrasound performed to inject dye into my uterus and determine if there were any blockages in my Fallopian tubes and if so, to remove the debris. Then for the next 4 months I had 4 IUIs done, each resulting in a negative pregnancy test. An IUI is where they take the sperm and insert it at the base of my Fallopian tubes, and hopefully it will make it to fertilize an egg. Once the last one came back, Jeremy and I decided to move on to IVF. IVF, is a long process. I had to spend about \$4k on drugs alone. I remember when I had them delivered, because I had to work and the carrier wouldn't drop them off at the door. I had to actually sign for them so I could refrigerate them. I actually had to have my \$4k worth of drugs delivered in a giant box to my work, so I was constantly checking the tracking status. For the next few weeks, I had to start giving myself 5 shots per day into my stomach, to prepare my eggs for retrieval. I also had to have Jeremy give me daily shots into my intramuscular (my hip/butt) to "trick" my body into thinking that I was already pregnant. Soon enough, I was prepped and ready to go for my retrieval. For this procedure, they put me under because the retrieval very invasive. The fertility doctor has to go up through your vagina, into your Fallopian tubes, and then to your ovaries to remove the eggs. After they got my eggs out, which I think was about 36 total (?) they're then sent off for testing and such before they're fertilized. Eventually we ended up with 9 normal embryos and were then frozen to preserve them before they transferred one back into me with hopes that it'd stick!

We had saved up \$10k, borrowed \$5k from family, and got a credit card to cover the remaining \$6k. This was big for us since we had saved up the \$10k to hopefully be able to buy a house soon. Because having a family was way more important to us, we opted to start our journey. Jeremy and I had said many prayers, pleading to be blessed with a child. ANY child. We so desperately wanted to become parents and raise a child of our own. Heavenly Father answered our prayers, just not in the way we had expected them to be. Owen fulfilled his purpose. He not only made us parents, but he gained a body. I know we'll see him again one day, and be together forever. But that time just seems so far away. After we lost him, I just kept thinking that I didn't care about anything else in the world. All I wanted was to be with my Angel.

Money is just money. You can always get more by working hard for it. But having to go home from the hospital empty handed because our son died, and still being responsible for not only the IVF money, but now for the hospital bills for myself and our baby... it stung. We ended up using our entire tax refund in 2020, and our Covid stimulus checks to pay off our IVF debt, and start chipping away at our hospital bills. Do you know how hard it is to grieve while having about \$32k worth of debt hovering over you like a dark cloud? We'd honestly pay every dime we had then, and even today to have our Owen back.

It's been 2 years, and 2 months since we lost him. We were charged \$10k for the hospital bills. We still have \$6480 left to pay off. If we had been able to use our IVF money to go towards paying off the hospital bills, we'd be debt free by now.

Please help others like us to be able to achieve their dreams of becoming parents. Being a mom has been the biggest blessing, knowing that I have my own little guardian angel watching out for me. Fertility coverage is what's standing between many, and their dreams.

Sincerely,
Lauren Rader