

The SADS Foundation Presents:

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual

# No Ball *at All*



## Abrielle Watschke

The summer was off to a beautiful start. We had five healthy children and a sixth on the way. Our youngest, Abrielle, had just turned two years old. At her annual well checkup, her pediatrician had declared, **she is the picture of health!** Little did we know that just one week later, Abrielle and our family would endure a life-changing event.



It was a typical Saturday morning and I was running errands. My phone kept buzzing and finally I looked down to see several frantic text messages from my teenage daughter. **“MOM! HELP! ABRI’S NOT BREATHING! COME HOME!!”** I raced home to a street lined with fire trucks, police cars and an ambulance with Abrielle inside. My husband and I clung to each other awaiting news. We finally were told our daughter was breathing on her own.

We were shocked to learn Abrielle had just survived a sudden cardiac arrest. Without warning or any precursor symptoms, her heart had arrested. Abrielle was fortunate that my husband was home and immediately called 911 and performed CPR until the paramedics arrived. The paramedics whisked Abrielle to the ambulance where her heart was started with a defibrillator.

At Children’s Hospital, we learned our daughter has Long QT Syndrome. Abrielle would need medicine for the

rest of her life and would require an ICD before going home. It was extremely difficult to comprehend what had happened and its long-term implications. In one morning, life as we knew it had turned upside down. Our time in the hospital wasn’t nearly long enough to answer all of our questions, the biggest one being: **Is Abrielle going to be ok?**

A few weeks later, I discovered the SADS Foundation website. When I felt overwhelmed with fear and uncertainty over her condition, I would read the Living and Thriving stories for encouragement. These stories taught me that my hope was stronger than my fear.

It’s now been more than two years since Abrielle’s cardiac arrest. She is cared for by a world-leading expert and has been extremely stable. Though we needed to make some minimal lifestyle changes, Abrielle is a typical little girl who is outgoing, smiles often, and easily makes new friends. Her favorite things are snuggling, singing and dancing.

Although there may be future challenges, she is blessed to have an incredible medical care team and supportive family and friends. We are grateful to the SADS Foundation for showing us hope when we needed it most. We proudly support the organization as a crucial resource for families affected by heart arrhythmias and the medical professionals who treat them.

-The Watschke Family