



## Parker-James Kenneth Gooler

July 1, 2014 - August 28, 2018

Parker-James Kenneth Gooler passed away on August 28, 2018, at 3:43 a.m., at Valley Children's Hospital in Madera, California. He had just celebrated his 4th birthday on July 1, and had finally outgrown the need for his ventilator on July 11. Two days before his passing he was continuing to progress by requiring only one-sixteenth of a liter of oxygen while sleeping. We had no idea that our beautiful boy's time here on Earth would come to such a fast and abrupt end, even as we rode the life STAR Ambulance in the late afternoon on Monday, August 27, to Children's Hospital.

Parker was born at 4:01 p.m. on July 1, 2014, to Chelsea Gooler and Carlos Torrez. He came into the world in the most unusual way and was far from normal from the start. During a 4 month scheduled OB ultrasound we learned that Parker had an omphalocele containing his liver on the outside of his body. Two weeks later during a recheck, doctors also discovered that he had a large left diaphragmatic hernia allowing his fragile and newly growing organs to mingle between the chest cavity and abdomen. This meant a guarantee for underdeveloped lungs as well as further complications were already set in stone in the future.

After numerous rejections from several physicians up and down the coast of California while we sought hope for his survival, we were continuously told to give up hope and that his odds of even making it to his birth were less than

1%. The word terminate was a repetitious response we continuously heard. Coming upon 7 months along with no doctors left on the list but one, we sought out the final specialty surgeon in hopes of a miracle. I can still remember the day of going into that small office in Fresno where we met Dr. David Hodge and his wonderful office staff that we would later call close friends. We sat across from each other for what seemed like an eternity as he reviewed the extensive file of testing that I had undergone during my search and diagnoses. After the anticipation and anxiety began to take over, I finally had to ask, "Well???..."

Preparing to hear what I was used to hearing, I was caught off guard when Dr. Hodge optimistically looked up at me and explained that by just the results that he held in his hands and judging by that alone, he thought that Parker would have at least a 10% chance of survival after birth, and maybe higher as the next few weeks could prevail. Parker was born at CRMC Fresno via emergency C-section by Dr. Elizabeth Woods. He weighed 5 lb. 13 oz. and was 19 3/4 inches tall. Not expected to live past his first 24 hours due to having only one and one-third lungs, being the size of a 22-week old preemie, as well as suffering from severe pulmonary hypertension, I poured my heart out to the Lord and made a plea. I prayed to God to please grant me just one day, just 24 hours, and if Parker must be taken then I would be grateful and content with the time I had, but I begged and cried out to Him with all my heart to please let me borrow this sweet newborn baby boy.

I believe the Lord heard me, because Parker-James quickly made his mark as a miracle baby and begin defying all odds. Most neonatologists who were present there had little to no hope, and yet they also could not explain Parker's strength and ability to go on. Thanks to God's will and the wonderful, loving care of the NICU staff at CRMC, Parker was reluctantly transferred to Valley Children's Hospital at 13 days old, so that he could receive the higher equipped care and surgery he needed that was not possible at CRMC NICU.

At 14 days old, around 4:30 in the morning, Parker's heart stopped. Thankfully, with help of the NICU nursing staff and God's will we were allowed to continue borrowing this little angel boy. With God's grace and the neonatologists on board, he survived with zero consequences.

Over the course of the next 10 months, we rode the crazy roller coaster of NICU. Thankfully, it was at an upward slope despite the extreme lows and freefalls that we encountered. Along the way, not only did Parker continue defying odds, but he quickly captured the hearts of everyone he met as well as those who came up on him. His smile became a light that shined like no other and captivated the entire unit as a whole. Many rules went out the door those months as the RNs that didn't work at Primary Care due to Specialty Abilities and Talents lined up daily to see him and be his. He loved each and every one of his new family members and we were so grateful for the love and support and care that we received from each and every single one. Rina, Debbie, Brenda, Tara, Silvia, Marcy, Pat, and MANY more, thank you so much for not only your friendship but for loving us all and standing by us through the good and the bad.

In March of 2015 we had finally joined the rehab unit, a moment we were told would never come. Once again, Parker took in everyone that came upon him and made them his, PCTs, RTs, and RNs alike. After almost 3 weeks and his first walk outside of the hospital with charge nurse Tom, we finally got to go do our training with Children's Home Care. Passing our "care" testing and ventilator training, we were approved to be discharged. To say that this came without a thousand "family" visitors sending us off and saying goodbye with dry eyes, wishing us well, would be a lie. That April day in 2015 we fearfully drove home with Parker for the very first time.

Parker adapted to home life at our home in Tulare rather quickly, with the

exception of any non-NICU noise occurring, which would regularly startle or wake him up, just like a car alarm would wake you up if placed next to your bed while you were sleeping. In his first year home he learned to roll over, crawl, sit up, baby babble, and much more. He traveled to Sonoma County and Pismo Beach, enjoying the sights, sunshine, and captivated strangers with his smiles and waves. During his second year home he went to Disneyland and spent several weekends at the beach people-watching. He loved to watch people and wave and smile, and of course also flirt with any girl he came into contact with by blowing kisses. He also insisted on loving and hugging any dog that happened across his path. Great Danes were one of his favorite breeds.

In June of 2016, Parker was admitted for the first time since discharge and went straight to PICU after an emergency surgery due to a reoccurrence in his diaphragmatic hernia, which needed another repair. It was a bitter-sweet reunion with the "family." After 3 weeks of gracing PICU with his presence and finally getting past the recovery stage, he became an unusual type of PICU patient. After about three days of his joyful morning dancing and jumping in his crib, the staff who watched him bust a move from the window and distractedly gathered around daily to watch finally deemed him healthy enough to head home. We celebrated the return home by taking a trip to Avila and staying for the weekend. It was there that we discovered Parker's great love for farm animals.

Throughout Parker's third year of life at home, he made a huge headway on his health progress. He accomplished the undoable; according to his physical evaluations with various experts in medicine, he did what should not have been able to have been done. With the help of Dominique and Jeanine Parker, he not only learned how to stand and walk in his walker, but learned how to stand unassisted and then eventually walk and run, as well as becoming fantastic at jumping up and down whenever he was excited about

something.

He outgrew his ventilator during the day and began only using oxygen along with a speaking valve, allowing us to hear his sweet giggle. He also learned how to say Mama and Dada and often hummed along to music. He was becoming quite the normal three year old learning how to climb in and out of his crib as well as jumping up on the couch and scaring us all half to death as we constantly feared he would fall like any other toddler would. Somehow, we never had that occur. One of his favorite things to do was to dance along with his best friend and big sister Alyssa as he would do the Cha-Cha following her around in a circle. He also loved watching music videos with Dada on YouTube, dancing around like a crazy person to Bruno Mars and grinning ear-to-ear the whole time. He was always happy, always humble, and ended the day usually swaying to Mama singing karaoke music before being placed into his rocker to be rocked to sleep.

In October of 2017, Parker contracted a detrimental virus causing extreme weight loss and immune system weakening, with a permanent side effect of gastroparesis. This was by far the greatest setback he ever encountered, but thanks to his specialty doctors and the rehab staff, we learned what our new normal would be and pushed forward. Parker continued to grow stronger and get through the next couple of months with either setbacks or progress; however, physically he was still not at baseline and during evaluating him for his final surgery, which has been tentatively planned for June, the surgery was postponed until spring in fear that he was still too weak to go in to the OR.

Parker enjoyed his summer swimming and playing in the water, as well as spending time on the beach and visiting cows at our friends' farm. He loved the calves above anything else. His favorite shows to watch on TV were Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, Chuggington, StoryBots, and Sid the Science Kid. He was a huge PBS fan. He had his first real play date this summer,

smiling, grinning, and running the whole time like a normal boy enjoying a summer day with his best friends. We learned how to cope with his gastroparesis and finally were managing things at a progressive level, allowing for some much delayed progress to take place. With the idea to start weaning him off his ventilator completely, to him calling the shots as he usually did, one day he just flat out refused to use it anymore. Parker was finally free of all mechanics and truly living life in ways no one thought he could. We began gradually tapering off his oxygen while he was sleeping at night and progressively using less and less as the days went on. One of Parker's final goals was to no longer be oxygen dependent and he was getting so close to achieving that. His final two weeks he finally started to put some weight on and we could tell that his strength was finally returning. He was growing a little bit more every single day and becoming stronger, happily smiling along the way. Health-wise he was the best he had been in almost a year and in spirit, as always, was a beautiful ray of sunlight.

Parker never let anyone be negative, without any exceptions. He had an innate sense of what and how you were feeling at all times, no matter what face you decided to put on to try and hide it from him. Somehow, he always saw through the mask. He would come up to you, placing his hands on your cheeks, literally forehead to forehead, and he would look right into your eyes briefly, giving you this extreme serious look followed by a smirky smile, and then bop you on the face and start to walk off, never failing to look back and make sure that he saw you smile. It was impossible to not smile back and the way that he would look at you was like he was telling you, "Snap out of it!" This was something that he would do without fail and how it would work, well I guess you would have to have been there to know.

Monday, August 27, Parker woke up out of sorts, however still smiling off and on and getting through his normal morning routine, we didn't anticipate or

suspect anything abnormal for him to be wrong. That all changed by 11 a.m., when he was progressively worsening as well as experiencing decreased comfort levels, alerting us to start contact with the team over at Children's Hospital. All in agreement that something was definitely not okay, we came into Valley Children's ED. After numerous tests and radiographs, Parker was prepped for surgery and quickly swept away. Near the end of the procedure he began to code and, not strong enough to recover, his lungs stopped functioning. Once revived after several minutes and many failed attempts, his body had gone too long without oxygen. With his eyes fixed and dilated he was moved from OR to ICU with ongoing epinephrine on board to keep his blood pressure from dropping to non-existent levels. The intensivist at that moment explained to me that it was really a matter of time and most likely it would be cut quite short; however, they could continue reviving him if I chose to do so, and as she was explaining there were nurses getting ready to hook up an epinephrine pump and bringing in the CPR board. Once completely moved into the PICU room, having receiving the explanation that he was technically already gone, I picked him up and, holding him close to my heart as he snuggled his head into my chest, his eyes drew closed and he passed away in less than 1 minute.

We took turns holding Parker for hours, until after the sun rose. Then, for the first time in his life, we left his bedside without him. It was the most unnatural feeling that any of us had ever felt. We are not sure why his time here had suddenly come to pass or how or why things ended the way they did. We only know one thing that is certain, God is good. We are so grateful to have been blessed with such an amazing little boy, even if it only lasted for 4 years. He was the Miracle of Miracles and he brought us nothing but joy. We would all do it again if given the choice to do so, even knowing how it would end. He will forever live in the hearts of every single person who loved him and will continue his works here on Earth, even as he is now in God's Heavenly Kingdom also attending whatever special job God had planned for him. He

gives hope to others who have also been given non-existent survival rates by science-dependent doctors and we hope that they will come to understand that God always has the final say.

Parker leaves behind his big sister Alyssa, mother Chelsee, father Carlos, grandpa Ken, grandma Maria, grandma Debbie, nana Carolyn, his aunts, Lupe, Daisy, Marlene, and Jolene, uncles Juan, Dustin, Jessie, Steve, Jason and Ronnie. Cousins Alex, James, Brandon, Liam, Isaac, and Hailei, great uncles Kieron, Kevin, John, Salvador, Juaquen, Victoraino, Jesus, Jose, Amondo, great aunts Cherie, Teresa, Kelly, Carmen, Guadalupe, Jovita, Esperansa, Eloysa and many second and third cousins. He also leaves behind his dog Bella, RN Rina, RT Andrea, teacher Donna, Jenine, Domenique, RT Tom, RT Gurshakti, RT Kris, RN Joni, Aletta, RN Marie, Amy, Jennifer W, Dave, Carla, RT Dena, Dr. Thusu, Dr. Piedz, Dr. Au Yeung, Holly, Dr. Rouillard, Dr. Sudhakar, Dr. Rowe, RN Mary, Juliann, Kaity, PCT Juan, PCT Lee, RN Karen, RCP Dawn, Debi, RN Sovath, RN Mandy, RN Donna, RN Anna, RN Carol, Gloria, Tiffany, Pat, Daniel, Yvonne, Christine, Christina, Maria, RCP Kelly, RN Rita, RT Tracy, RT Jackie, Cheryl, RN Holly, Mia, RT Marielle, RN Marcy, PT Mike, OT Sandy, RT Dana, Emily, Sara, Lydia, Courtney, Kim, Nancy, Josh, RT Dannielle, Epi, Surgio, RN April, RN Tera, Camm, RN Brenda, RN Kaitie, RN Ronnie, RN Jodi, RN Danise, RN Jenny, RN Jen, Elena, RN Karin, Kim, Grace, RN Pat M., RT Dina, RN Roces, Karl and Linda Funk, Kelly, RT Tara, Terri, Maryann, Karena, Les, Jenny O., Lauren, Kristi, Jeff, RN Tom, RN Debbie, RT Threasa, RT Cheyanne, RN Kamia, RN Racheal, RN Kristin, RN Sylvia, RN Denise, RN Neila, Jenny, RN Carrey, RN Carrie, RN Michelle, PCT Lee, RN Karen, RT Rohnda, PCT CJ, Dr. Hodge and Staff, Rehab Unit, NICU Unit, PICU Unit, Child Life Unit, and our entire Grace Family.

Parker leaves behind a legacy of smiles unforgotten and NEVER to be forgotten. His viewing will take Place on September 21, from 4pm to 7pm at

Salser and Dillard Funeral Chapel, 127 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. His service will be held September 22 11am, also at Salser and Dillard Funeral Chapel. For directions, please call the chapel at (559)-635-1144 or visit their website at [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com). The reception to follow will be held at Grace Community Church, 424 Lovers Lane, Visalia. Please send all flowers, sympathy cards, or donations to 2959 W. Zumwalt Ave., Tulare, CA, 93274. Thank you and God bless!

# Previous Events

## Viewing

SEP **21**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel  
127 East Caldwell  
Visalia, CA 93277

## Funeral

SEP **22**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel  
127 East Caldwell  
Visalia, CA 93277

# Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Parker-James Kenneth Gooler*



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**Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel** - September 22, 2018 at 01:59 PM



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Parker-James Kenneth Gooler*



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**Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel** - September 22, 2018 at 01:59 PM

AL

“ I am Alyssa, Parker-James sister. My most favorite memory of my brother is how he would cheer people up. My reasoning for that, is because no matter what it took he would make anyone smile. He was never selfish and thinking about how he was not feeling good, or how he couldn't do something. Instead he found joy in what made you happy, like for me he loved watching me ride my horse Betty or admiring and cheering me on in his own way or when I was competitively swimming. He was and in a different way is a sweet boy. I will never forget my brother, like who could. I will always remember and I will see him way in the future when my passing comes. But for now I will pray, I will remember and hold closely to me the great times and I will wait patiently. Not to mention be successful for the both of us.



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**Alyssa** - October 23, 2018 at 12:14 AM

MS

“ Chelsee and family...My deepest condolences to you. Parker was a blessing while here on earth. Heaven definitely gained another angel. It was a pleasure caring for him as a baby. God bless you.  
Maggie RN



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**Maggie Sandoval** - September 24, 2018 at 12:51 PM

KT

“ *What a painfully beautiful tribute to your Angel son. Parker was such a gift to you and your family and obviously to everyone who met him.*

*Your story prompted me to revisit Jacob Alexander's brief visit on this Earth. I'm sure you remember him. He passed on graduation day from El Molino. Jacob said that he felt he was put on this Earth to make people smile and he certainly did!*

*I believe Parker belonged to that special club and their memories and the memories of all the children who visited this Earth only briefly will always bring a smile and a tear to those of us lucky enough to have known them.*

*Bless you, dear Chelsee.*

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**Kristin Thurman-Fein** - September 18, 2018 at 06:13 PM

CA

“ *Carolyn Adams lit a candle in memory of Parker-James Kenneth Gooler*



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**Carolyn Adams** - September 17, 2018 at 09:31 PM



“ *Endless thoughts and prayers to the entire family* 🙏🏻🙏🏻💚



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**Dawn Kessler** - August 31, 2018 at 10:57 PM

JM

“ *Jacqueline MacPhee lit a candle in memory of Parker-James Kenneth Gooler*



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**Jacqueline MacPhee** - August 31, 2018 at 01:44 PM

AN

“ *your story has not ended it has just truly begun. such a strong little man to rush home. your journey on earth seem so short to all those who love you. seems unfair and wrong but your the one who rose above us all to show only the best ones go so early. i know so many feeling so sad but to me my dear sweet boy you won your race and of lifes lesson and gifted heavens celebration. congratulation sweet little boy*



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**ann** - August 31, 2018 at 12:13 AM