

Meet Todd, Wendy & Keegan Benner



The SBHANA is proud to welcome baby Keegan Benner and his parents Wendy and Todd as our newest members. Keegan was born with spina bifida on March 26th at 7:47pm. Here are a few words from Todd describing the decision that was made to welcome Keegan into their lives.

"My decision was not completely know until Sunday past (November 25th). I knew in my heart that there was only one choice for me. I was asked if I was being selfish for making the decision to have a child who will be challenged, who will face many hurdles just to live. I believe the choice to terminate the pregnancy would have been the selfish choice. This baby chooses to live, who are we to make the choice for him/her whether to live or not. I believe the child chooses the parents, and everything happens for a reason. This is my life the way I was taught to live and I embrace it.

I wanted a child who would benefit the world and inspire others. I feel that everything I have experienced has let to the path and I have never been so sure in my life that this is what I want.

Wendy and I did not make this choice lightly and we have educated ourselves as much as possible. We do not expect to obligate anyone else in our decision, but we welcome anyone if they choose, to share this experience with us. I leave you with these words so that you might understand who I am, and what I aspire to be."

Todd and Wendy decided to get married before the birth of their baby, which didn't leave much time! They heard about a radio contest on The Morning Show on the Bounce 91.7 which was offering a wedding paid for in Vegas. Although they knew that Wendy couldn't travel so close to the due date, they entered the contest hoping for the best. Here is their entry for the radio contest:

"We are a young couple trying to make it here in Edmonton. We meet and fell in love in 2006, soon after we moved here. We are both beginning our careers and enjoy what we do. We are both self employed and work as much as possible to make ends meet.

In the fall of 2007 we were blessed with the news that we were expecting a Baby. We were both ecstatic (by the way we were both planning children). We were still financially tight, but we were going to make it work. In November we were told by the doctors that our child had Spina Bifida, a neural tube defect, and that there would be

complications if we continued with the birth. This would include surgery after birth and up to a month in the hospital before the baby comes home from the Stollery Hospital.

The decision was difficult to sit with, but we decided together that there was only one choice in our hearts. Our baby boy is due the end of March. It was during that week that I proposed to my Fiancée, promising that no matter what happens we will do it together.

We have gone through so many options for where to have the wedding, who to invite and mostly how much will it cost. Just the discussions kept us up at night and the stress was overwhelming. I used to think that if it was just the 2 of us I would be willing to wait. Now that we are 7 weeks away, we want to have the commitment in stone before his birth. If there is anything you can do to help we would be grateful..."

The response to Todd and Wendy's story was overwhelmingly positive. Members of the community came through and donated everything that was needed to have a wedding in Edmonton. Todd & Wendy were married on February 29th, 2008. At the wedding reception, which was held at Hunter's Green Golf Course, Cindy Smith gave a presentation about the SBHANA and Darlene and Morgan Cathcart gave a wonderful joint presentation informing the audience about spina bifida and hydrocephalus. A silent auction was held at their reception to raise money for the SBHANA and a grand total of just over \$1900.00 was raised!



Todd and Wendy are looking forward to starting their life together with Keegan and would like to thank the following people for their contributions: Julie (photography), Curtis and Shannon (Hunter's Green Golf Course), Ben Kellert (pastor), Kelsey (dress), Anna (make-up and hair) and Pepper & Dylan (The Bounce 91.7 Morning Show), and everyone else who helped make their day so special!