

‘Don’t Give Up,’ Says Mom Who Refused to Abort Disabled Son

Parents who were advised to abort their severely disabled baby because he was unlikely to survive have celebrated the boy’s first birthday.

Shelly and Rob Wall even bought a coffin before the baby was born because they were told his chances of living outside the womb were so small. But now Noah Wall has learned to move his arms, smile, wave and say “mama” and “dada.”

Shelly wants to tell their story so that mothers who are pregnant with a disabled baby won’t “give up hope.”

Noah was diagnosed with spina bifida, rare chromosomal abnormalities and fluid on the brain at a 12-week scan. The couple was offered an abortion but refused, wanting to give their baby a chance to live. Noah’s chance of survival was so low that they started to organize his funeral before he was born.

“Before he was born, we received a letter saying he would not be resuscitated if he couldn’t breathe on his own because his condition was so serious,” Shelly says. “To be pregnant and have to go to a funeral parlor to pick a coffin for your unborn baby is absolutely horrible.”

When Noah was born, he took a breath, and doctors decided to do all they could to help him live. He has been back to the hospital frequently and has to be massaged five times a day, along with regular physiotherapy and hydrotherapy sessions.

“We don’t know how long he will live, but we won’t put a time on him,” Shelly says. “We just enjoy every day and do as much as we can with him. By telling our story, we want to inspire others who are pregnant with disabled babies not to give up

hope. There are 900 pregnancies with spinal defects every year, and only 200 babies are actually born.”