



**Send a message of love  
and support the babies!**

Won't you be there for moms like Katie who bravely love and care for our most vulnerable children with special needs? Let's celebrate all the children like Grady who bring us such great joy by challenging us to be our very best selves.

For every \$10 you give, you will receive this beautiful card by a local artist with autism for a special nurturing person in your life.

Just mail the enclosed response note with your gift and we will send your packet right away! Thank you for making your most generous contribution today.



**Photography by: Tamlin Photography**

A donation to Friends goes straight to the good work of helping families in crisis. You can help us purchase special equipment, give immediate support to families who must travel for care or endure extended stays in hospitals, provide respite for parents, education to care givers, and host a year full of family events where literally thousands of family members and their special children can relax, have fun, and network with other families.

*Thank You*  
**for Your support.**



*Friends of Tennessee's*  
**BABIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Because  
BABIES  
can't wait.**

**helpingbabies.org**

**Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs**  
**P.O. Box 544 | Alcoa, TN 37701-0544 | (865) 984-4326**

Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization working to enhance the potential of infants and young children with disabilities by offering support to their families and the early intervention professionals who serve them.

**JOYFUL  
GRADY**



*Friends of Tennessee's*  
**BABIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**



# Dear Friends,

MAY 2025

**“Grady is a joy!” declares his mom, Katie. “He has the biggest smile that takes up his whole face and the most contagious laugh! He loves people and he is truly so, so happy.”**

Born with an auto-inflammatory condition, cerebral palsy, and severe visual impairment, that beautiful smile is about the only thing that has come naturally to Grady. Everything had to be painstakingly taught – even the most basic skills like eating, standing, or grasping a toy.

**“It was scary,” Katie remembers. “We went from a completely typical pregnancy to an emergency C-section and seven weeks in the NICU. When Grady was finally released, I vowed to put the days of sadness and fear behind us, go home, and focus on being a mama.”**

Easier said than done. Most new moms don’t have to learn how to give a tiny six-pound baby two injections every day. Imagine having to jab a needle with perfect precision into a leg that is so, so small, and doesn’t stay still. But Grady couldn’t live without the medicine, so his parents quickly became pros. Then, about seven months later Grady had a serious health crisis that landed him right back in the hospital with an additional diagnosis of epilepsy.

Feeling helpless and overwhelmed is common for parents like Katie, and the depth of isolation is real. Every excursion out into the world with a medically fragile baby is like climbing Mount Everest. Only you don’t have sherpas to help with your equipment or guides to show you the way.

**“When we were at our lowest point our early intervention therapists told us about Friends of Tennessee’s Babies with Special Needs,” Katie recalls. “What a gift! The Family Encouragement Conference is our favorite. A whole day of workshops, networking, resources, delicious food, and socializing. The information and advice we got from other parents with medically involved children was far more valuable than anything we could find online or even in a doctor’s office,” says Katie.**

Moms like Katie make Friends of Tennessee’s Babies with Special Needs want to give our very best to every



family we reach. Over the past 30 years, *Friends* has grown to serve around 3,000 young children and babies with special needs in 16 counties in East Tennessee. Priorities include a hearing-aid loaner bank, respite care, family learning workshops, an educational library, NICU care packages, travel assistance for out-of-area medical appointments, adaptive equipment, and emergency family assistance. *Friends* also offers a series of online training modules to help families learn techniques of care and how to manage their child’s lifelong financial needs, as well as hosting a year-long roster of family events like Zoo Day, a Smokies Baseball game, a trip to Ripley’s Aquarium, the Pumpkin Patch, and a huge Winter Holiday Party.

When we asked Katie what advice she might share with other parents in a similar position, she quickly replied,

**“I learned pretty early how triggering comparisons and not reaching milestones can be. Grady will never be on track with other kids. Once you can really, truly release that you can focus on all the things these very special kids can do.”**

Won’t you help us honor all the dedicated caregivers who *Friends* support by acknowledging the special people in your life? For every \$10 you donate, we will give you a lovely greeting card to send to someone who has nurtured you. Just fill out the enclosed response note, mail it with your gift in the envelope provided, and we will send the cards you ordered, envelopes, and postage stamps so you can add your personal touch and mail them out to all those you love and appreciate.

Thank you for helping us expand our circle of *Friends*.  
With warmest regards and deepest gratitude,

*Melissa Goin*

**Melissa Goin**, Board Chair  
Friends of Tennessee’s Babies with Special Needs



**Send a message  
of love and support  
to the babies!**

**Won't you please donate to  
Friends of Tennessee's  
Babies with Special Needs  
today?**



**Please make check payable to  
“Friends of Tennessee’s Babies with  
Special Needs” P.O. Box 544 • Alcoa, TN  
37701-0544**

**I would like to support babies with special needs and  
honor the nurturing people in my life.**

**I enclose my gift of** ☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$40 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For every \$10 you give, we will send you one of these beautiful cards for you to send to anyone you wish to honor. Please provide your name and address below, tell us how many cards you would like, and send it in with the corresponding donation. We will happily mail you a packet with the number of requested cards and envelopes, along with the postage, in plenty of time for you to add your personal touch and mail to the special people in your life.

## PLEASE SELECT FROM OPTION BELOW

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directly to helping babies with special needs where it is  
needed most. Gift Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

☐ **3. Donate or Purchase  
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