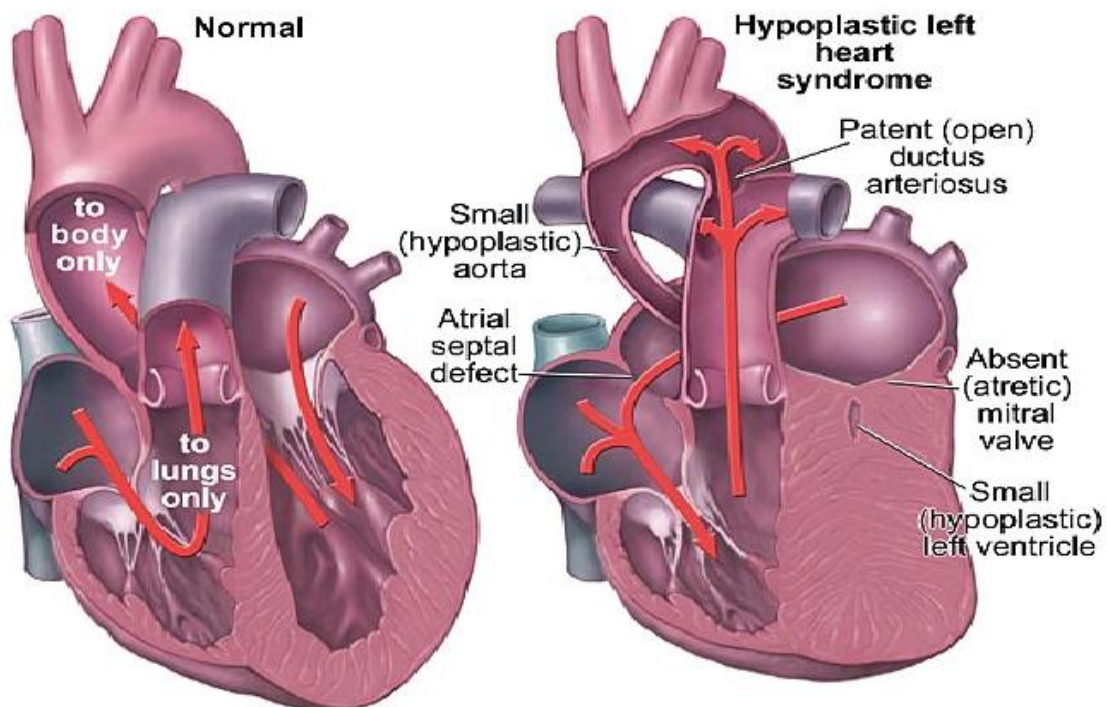


Team Braylon Gift of Hope Fund



Braylon was a very brave little boy who was born with a very serious heart condition. In his honor, a fund has been established to promote research into the causes of severe congenital heart defects, the types of heart defects that are difficult or impossible to fix. The funds will be used to determine the causes of and find new treatments for a severe heart condition known as hypoplastic left heart syndrome in which patients are essentially born with "half" a heart.



Congenital cardiac defects occur in approximately 0.8% of all newborns, are the most common type of congenital anomaly, and are the most common cause of death in the first year of life. Hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS) affects approximately 4% of children born with congenital heart disease, but has been reported to cause up to 23% of the deaths attributable to heart defects, making it one of the most common causes of death in infancy. Surgical advances have greatly improved survival but still only 60-70% of patients with this diagnosis will survive to their 5th birthday. The hope for improving the chances for survival rest with identifying the causes and finding new treatments.

The Team Braylon Gift of Hope Fund is committed to identifying new treatment approaches to help patients with severe congenital heart defects like Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. Research supported by the funds has determined that, while there are many causes of hypoplastic left heart syndrome, they all share the common feature that the pumping chamber stops growing and starts maturing too early during development. The cue to change from a growth phase to a maturation phase depends on blood flow through the heart. If the flow is limited due to abnormal development of one of the heart valves, then the heart uses that as a signal to stop growing. Research currently supported by the Gift of Hope Fund is identifying the genetic signals that cause the heart to stop growing with the goal of being able to regulate those signals and encourage heart growth even if the flow through the heart is limited by valve defects.

Our ultimate goal is to improve the chances of survival and quality of life for patients with hypoplastic left heart syndrome and other severe heart defects. It is the dream of all of us who remember the courage and joy of a little boy.

If you would like to find out more about the research or find out how you can help, please contact:

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