

## Ronald King Hood

### *Breathe*

It was so horrific for us, not knowing whether our daughter would live or die. She was born two months premature... she was so tiny, and her lungs hadn't developed. Her heart was strong though. She was a fighter and she struggled to survive, to hold on.

I remember wishing for a boy when I first learned my wife was pregnant. I figured boys were strong and they would carry on the family name. But watching my daughter fight and struggle to breathe, I knew no boy would be strong enough to handle this. I could barely handle it. I'd thought so many times to just have the doctors pull the plug to stop my daughter's suffering. But it was as if she could read my mind, and her little heart would pulsate and beat faster, as if to say, "I'm here, don't give up on me."

Sixty-four days later, as my wife and I held each other tightly with tears in our eyes, the doctor unplugged the breather our daughter was connected to. She was breathing on her own, she had survived. We had survived.