

Heart-stopping moment leads to rare diagnosis (Broadcast)

INTRO:

A HORRIFYING SCREAM JOLTED STEPHANIE THOMAS AWAKE LATE ONE NIGHT.

HER TWO-YEAR-OLD SON – ASLEEP FOR A FEW HOURS – SUDDENLY LET OUT A SCREAM NO PARENT EVER WANTS TO HEAR.

TAKE VO

STEPHANIE RAN INTO HIS ROOM... AND HER SON WAS ARCHING HIS BACK... LETTING OUT “AWFUL SCREAMS” ... STEPHANIE SAYS. THEN HE FACEPLANTED FORWARD AND STOPPED BREATHING.

FORMALLY A NURSE – NOW A CLINICAL DIETITIAN AT OSF CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL OF ILLINOIS – STEPHANIE’S PAST MEDICAL BACKGROUND MEANT SHE USED TO BE C-P-R CERTIFIED. HER INSTINCTS KICKED IN... AND SHE JUMPED INTO ACTION. HER QUICK ACTIONS BOUGHT HER SON PRECIOUS TIME.

TAKE SOT | STEPHANIE THOMAS | 2-YEAR-OLD SON SUFFERS SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

“I pulled him out of his crib and told Kris [her husband] to call 9-1-1,” she says. “I put him on the floor, tried to find a pulse, but couldn’t feel any breath movement. I started doing compressions.”

VO TAG

EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ARRIVED MINUTES LATER AND RUSHED HIM TO THE HOSPITAL... WHERE HE STAYED FOR ELEVEN DAYS... UNDERGOING TESTS... INCLUDING GENETIC TESTING. THE DIAGNOSIS: BRUGADA SYNDROME – A RARE BUT SERIOUS GENETIC HEART CONDITION THAT CAN LEAD TO SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST.

JUST BEFORE BEING DISCHARGED – HER SON BECAME THE YOUNGEST CHILD IN THE WORLD TO RECEIVE WHAT’S CALLED AN EV-ICD... AN IMPLANTABLE DEVICE THAT MONITORS AND CAN CORRECT DANGEROUS HEART RHYTHMS WITHOUT THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH TRADITIONAL INTERNAL LEADS. NOW – THE THOMASES ARE LEARNING HOW TO NAVIGATE LIFE WITH A TODDLER WHO DOESN’T FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT’S HAPPENING TO HIM... BUT WHO KNOWS SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT. KRIS THOMAS... STEPHANIE’S HUSBAND... ADDS THAT ONE OF THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE IS THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AN EMERGENCY PLAN IN PLACE.