

# Baby born to become an organ donor

## United States

Will Pavia New York

Nineteen weeks pregnant and newly returned from a routine hospital check-up, Keri Young posted an image from an ultrasound scan on Facebook.

"This is our daughter's perfect heart," she wrote. "She has perfect feet and perfect hands. She has perfect kidneys, perfect lungs and a perfect liver."

The scan also made clear that the top of her head was missing and that she could not survive. Mrs Young, however, has decided to continue with the pregnancy, giving birth to the baby girl so that her organs can be donated to save the lives of other children.

She and her husband Royce named the child Eva. "For the next 20 weeks, I

will feel her kick, have the hiccups and we'll be able to hear her perfect heart beating all while knowing we'll only get a few short hours when she's born," she wrote. It was the first of a series of posts chronicling their devastating predicament, which have gained a wide audience.

Mrs Young, 31, from Oklahoma City, wrote of her misgivings about going on with the pregnancy after being told that her child had the condition known as anencephaly. Though she is against abortion, "truthfully we didn't hear the news ... and immediately think of carrying on with the pregnancy", she admitted.

Thinking of a way out from carrying the baby full-term, she said she was "relieved" when her specialist said at first

that it might not be possible to donate her daughter's organs.

"We had some pretty awful thoughts running through our minds, but we made a pact with each other that it was a judgment-free time and we could say whatever we were thinking without consequence.

"So we did. Everything from 'there's no way God exists' to 'we're going to spend all this money on pre-natal care and labour and delivery and not take a baby home?'"

That evening, however, a friend sent her a magazine interview with a woman who had been in almost exactly the same predicament.

Abbey Ahearn, also from Oklahoma, had a child diagnosed with the same condition and went ahead with the

pregnancy so that the baby could become an organ donor. "She lived a beautiful and incredible 14 hours and 58 minutes," Ms Ahearn said. "She spent her entire life surrounded by love, joy and peace. There was no sorrow, even when she passed away."

However, she also described the "waves of grief" that followed, in which friends and family "just didn't know what to say".

Mrs Young wrote that her former

physician, who had delivered her first child, told her that this would be "the most selfless thing I'd ever do". Her husband, a writer for the sports network ESPN, revealed in a separate post that his wife was reminded with every kick, that "she's carrying a baby that will die".

The couple also met their church pastor, who asked Mr Young how many lives he had saved, in his life. "Zero," Mr Young said, to which the pastor replied: "In your daughter's life, 24 hours of life, she might save 50 lives. She's going to be a very busy girl."

The Youngs have written of their darkest moments on Facebook

