

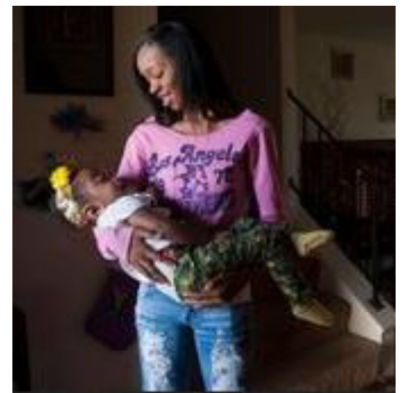
## Presentation-R2L.org (Right 2 Life)

*Once...living love is destroyed by contraception, abortion follows very easily—Mother Teresa of Calcutta, National Prayer Breakfast, February 3, 1994*

# Khya Amarie Polk-Thompson



Khya’s funeral was held on December 4, 2012 at Presentation Parish, presided over by Fr. Patrick Lee and Fr. Jeremy Leatherby. [Pastor Walter Hoye](#) gave the eulogy.



<http://www.sacbee.com/2013/11/30/5958080/book-of-dreams-khyas-short-life.html>

April 12, 2011 — November 22, 2013

## Book of Dreams: Khya’s short life inspires mother, family

By [Niesha Gates](#)

Special to The Bee

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The week before her death, 2-year-old Khya Polk-Thompson lay on her sister Nesha’s lap and brushed her fingers on Nesha’s hand, her way of showing affection.

Nesha, 19, kissed Khya's temple gently and held her close, rubbing her sister's feet. The journey has inspired a career for Nesha, who is attending Sacramento City College.

"I want to go into nursing," she said. The [Book of Dreams](#) has been asked to provide three laptops for the family, one of which will be for Nesha, to help in her quest to enter the medical field.

On the afternoon of Nov. 22, she was beside her mother, Stephanie Spidell, and younger sister Myesha as Khya drew her last breath. Services for Khya will be held at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday at Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Sacramento.

Stephanie Spidell said she and her children are coping with Khya's death better than she anticipated.

"I know how much I advocated for my daughter and how well I did my best to take care of her and loved her unconditionally and gave her a chance in life," Spidell said. "I'm sad and I get confused because I'm used to this routine of it taking time to get places and getting her stroller out of the car and feeding her every two hours. But I'm at peace. I'm at peace knowing she's at peace, running and talking and doing all the things she was limited to do here."

Khya had holoprosencephaly – a brain malformation. She never walked or talked, was fed through a tube and suffered seizures.

When doctors determined Khya's condition in utero, they said the baby likely wouldn't survive the pregnancy, and if she did, likely would only live minutes or hours.

"They said, 'Just terminate the pregnancy,'" Spidell said.

She remembers the day vividly. The Christmas season was in full swing and her four children and niece all were home from school.

Spidell donned her favorite velvet pants and soft, gray sweater – maternity clothes she had received from the Sacramento Life Center – and like every morning of her pregnancy, ate a bowl of oatmeal.

She was heading to an appointment that morning for a secondary ultrasound. Doctors suspected Khya had a cleft lip and wanted to do more imaging to prepare for next steps.

The whispers boomed in Spidell's ears as she lay on the examining table.

“They were looking at the pictures and I could hear them whispering, ‘This is wrong,’” Spidell said.

As she looked at images of her unborn daughter, doctors delivered the news. Her children cried as she broke the news of Khya’s diagnosis. Spidell was resolved to let God steer the course of Khya’s life, defying doctors’ recommendations to have an abortion.

Spidell told her children that they’d use the rest of the pregnancy to make memories and prepare to say goodbye to their sister upon her birth.

But when Khya arrived, despite the crowd of specialists in the delivery room, all she needed was the normal suction babies receive to breathe and treatment for jaundice.

Minutes turned onto hours. Hours turned into days. Days turned into years. This year, the family will celebrate Khya’s short life in the midst of the holiday season.

The family has inspired many at the Sacramento Life Center, a nonprofit health clinic and organization that works with pregnant women and their families.

“Stephanie is my hero – she’s so strong,” said Marie Leatherby, the center’s executive director. “As hard as we all know it is, she just keeps going.”

Spidell hopes to one day start a foundation in Khya’s honor for families grappling with similar situations.

“Her memory will continue,” Spidell said. “I want other people to know that life can continue even with a diagnosis that says something is incompatible with life. This is a new beginning for her, and a new beginning for me.”

**Needed:** Laptops for Stephanie Spidell and her daughters.

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<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/video-faced-with-terminal-prenatal-diagnosis-single-mother-of-five-chooses>

## **VIDEO: Faced with ‘terminal’ prenatal diagnosis, single mother of five chooses life**

by [Kirsten Andersen](#)

December 21, 2012

WASHINGTON,  
D.C., December  
21, 2012,



([LifeSiteNews.com](http://LifeSiteNews.com)) – Meet Stephanie Spidell. She’s a single mother of five children, one of whom has special needs. Now she’s raising six, because when her sister was murdered, she took in her niece, as well.

According to medical experts, Stephanie’s youngest child shouldn’t be here. Her daughter Khya was given an “incompatible with life” diagnosis while Stephanie was still pregnant with her.

Khya suffers from Alobar Holoprosencephaly, a brain abnormality that often results in miscarriage, stillbirth or early death.

Doctors urged Stephanie to abort.

If Khya survived the delivery, the doctors said, she would only live a few minutes or hours. If she was extremely lucky, she might live six months at most. Have an abortion, they told Stephanie, to “put [Khya] out of her misery.”

Stephanie refused to do it. “Even before I felt her move within me,” she said, “before I knew her gender or gave her a name, and especially when she was given an ‘incompatible with life’ diagnosis in utero, my daughter was a special gift who deserved to be loved and protected as a legal person.” She resisted her caregivers’ pressure to abort.



Stephanie said the decision to have Khya was an easy one. "I just decided that if my child was sick and facing one of the biggest challenges in her life, that I would take that time to comfort her, to love her, to be there with her, and to help her through any transition that she was going to make," she said.

Khya is now nearly two years old.

"I'm very blessed and honored to be Khya's mom," Stephanie said. "Along with my other five children, we are Khya's full-time caregivers and we want to share her story so that people will understand that all life is precious! What the world sees as 'imperfect' or a 'mistake,' we see as our much loved little sister and daughter."

She says her goals for Khya are to keep her healthy and growing so their family can keep showing her unconditional love.

Stephanie wasn't always so staunchly pro-life. "Before I had Khya," she said, "I had a number of abortions. Some of them, I wasn't married at the time, and I just didn't want any more kids. And I had a few abortions in my marriage, and I found myself having a baby and being pregnant three weeks later."

"It's sad to say, I used abortion as a form of birth control," Stephanie said.

That's part of the reason Stephanie is so glad she gave birth to Khya. She says it feels like her path to redemption. She's hopeful it will send an important message about the value of life and unconditional love to her older children and the niece she is raising.

She said she hopes they "never have to feel the guilt I still feel at times, knowing the decisions that I made."

Stephanie is now raising all six children without help from a husband or extended family. When her sister died, she said, "it tore our family apart." Instead, Stephanie has relied on pro-life advocates and the Roman Catholic Church for help.

"Khya has taught us so much about faith, hope, and love," Stephanie said. "I thank God for picking me to be her mom."