Meet the Duffer family. Dad Harley, Mom Justine, two-year-old Libi, and her new baby sister, Peyton.

(nat sound)

Mayo Clinic Hospital, Phoenix, Arizona

Photo courtesy: Duffer Family

Being together as a family has a deeper meaning for Harley this Valentine's Day. In 2021, Harley suffered heart failure from a genetic condition. He was eventually hospitalized and in a coma at the Mayo Clinic. He was given only six months to live unless he got a heart transplant.

Justine Duffer, Harley's wife

"There were several instances where the fear of him not making it through set in very heavy. And then you have a daughter at home saying, 'Where's daddy? Where's daddy?' You know it's a lot to go through."

The Duffers got the call they were hoping for thanks to the selfless generosity of this young man, Peyton Nurse who tragically lost his life in an accident. His last wish was to be an organ donor and his heart became the gift of life for Harley.

Harley Duffer, heart recipient

"And if it wasn't for organ donors, you know, I wouldn't be here. I know several people, organ recipients that wouldn't be here to raise their family. And this is one of the best gifts that you can give."

After his recovery, Harley was able to meet Peyton's mom, Lesley Nurse, so she could listen to her son's strong healthy heart beating inside his chest.

To carry on their organ donor's legacy, the Duffers named their new baby Peyton.

"I just want to say thank you so much for everything, for your son's bravery and the sacrifices that he's made. We went to see where Peyton's resting place is. Such bravery and selflessness from a young man. It's rare to find these days. And it's the difference between life and death."

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Marty Velasco Hames.