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# The Globe

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## A Mahoney Miracle

When doctors prepared expectant mother for the worst, she prayed

By Julie Buntjer  
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Worthington

Jenalee Mahoney was 20 weeks pregnant when, during her ultrasound appointment, a heart irregularity was discovered in the baby girl growing inside her.

The news sent Jenalee and her husband, Patrick to Sioux Falls, S.D. for further testing. Learning their God-given gift had a heart imperfection was devastating — even more so when they were told she had Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. The diagnosis meant her left chamber of the heart didn't properly develop and she would need open heart surgery soon after birth.

Within weeks of the HLHS diagnosis came a second blow. During a follow-up appointment, tests revealed Jenalee was carrying extra amniotic fluid.

Via telephone, Jenalee was told that in addition to HLHS, the baby tested positive for Trisomy 13, a duplication of the 13th chromosome.

"I was told T-13 was not compatible to life," Jenalee shared. She was also told not to Google the diagnosis.

"Well, I did," she said. The combined HLHS and Trisomy 13 diagnosis sounded like a death sentence for their baby girl. Doctors explained how her skin would be grey and her lips blue at birth, and that she wouldn't make a sound.

The Mahoneys shared the diagnosis with their mothers, and then Jenalee called her dad in South Dakota.

"My dad said, 'Stop it right now. That's a lie from the devil and your baby is fine,'" Jenalee recalled. "I thought, hmm, my dad is right."

Aside from their parents and their siblings, they kept the diagnosis from their friends and coworkers in the school district. Jenalee is a second grade teacher at Prairie Elementary, while



Tim Middagh / The Globe

Jenalee and Patrick Mahoney are shown with their miracle baby, Genevieve, now 7 months old.



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Genevieve Mahoney

Patrick teaches social studies, history and introduction to education in the newly developed education pathway program at Worthington High School.

"I didn't want anyone to speak that diagnosis over her," Jenalee said. "It's not the truth and I'm not going to believe it and it's fine."

As she moved into her third

trimester, Jenalee was well into a routine of praying over her baby girl through music.

"I would sing over her and pray over her and just continue to fight off those fiery darts," she said. "I would just breathe in the righteousness of Jesus and breathe out those negative thoughts. It was like a battle, but I never stopped believing."

Each subsequent appointment, Jenalee went in believing she would hear that her baby's heart was normal, and each time she left with the same news — the baby "definitely has hypoplastic; it looks worse than it did before."

She was told no surgeon would ever touch her baby if it had Trisomy, that her baby wouldn't survive and she just needed to be prepared to let her die.

"Walking out one day, I said to one of the nurses, 'What if you are wrong and I am going to walk out of here with a car seat?' She said, 'If that happens, I will bring the balloons.'"

"Well, I'm still waiting for my balloons," Jenalee said.

### The miracle

Jenalee was at home on the

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Julie Buntjer / The Globe

Marisel Castaneda will graduate later this month from Worthington High School. A self-described political activist, she will attend St. Catherine University in the fall to pursue a degree in political science and Spanish communications. She hopes to one day become an immigration attorney.

## Castaneda's political activism leads to plans to study law

WHS senior hopes to become immigration attorney

By Julie Buntjer

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**Editor's note:** This is the first of four planned features on graduating Worthington High School seniors.

WORTHINGTON — From her kindergarten classroom at Prairie Elementary to graduation day on May 24, Marisel Castaneda has left her mark on the 2019 class of Worthington High School.

With hard work and dedication, her goal is to return to the community that shaped her and continue to make an impact in immigration law.

Castaneda will attend St. Catherine University in Minneapolis-St. Paul this

fall to pursue her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in Spanish communications. Once she graduates, she then intends to enroll in law school.

Castaneda doesn't see herself becoming a career politician, but rather to work as an immigration attorney.

"I'm going to continue in political activism, especially in the metro area in upcoming 2020," she said.

Castaneda's interest in politics began in elementary school, when events were planned to honor Martin Luther King Jr.,

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Tim Middagh / The Globe

Kwik Trip Regional Manager Will Welch (center, left) and Worthington Store Manager Blaine Lee (center, right) break ground along with Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors members Friday morning on the new Kwik Trip site at the intersection of Oxford Street and Grand Avenue.

## Kwik Trip breaks ground

New convenience store slated for September opening

By Alyssa Sobotka

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WORTHINGTON — Construction may begin as soon as next week on Kwik Trip, which is expected to open this fall.

Representatives from the company celebrated the project to bring a new convenience store and gas station to the intersection of Oxford Street and Grand Avenue Friday. They were joined by Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors in breaking ground for the project.

The 24-hour convenience store is slated to

open at 5 a.m. Sept. 19, said Kwik Trip Regional Manager Will Welch.

He said the station will not only sell traditional convenience store food and refreshments, but also a variety of fresh food. From muffins, ice cream, milk, bread and other baked goods, Kwik Trip delivers many of its items directly from its own bakery, dairy and production facility in La Crosse, Wis.

Welch said Kwik Trip is in the early implementation phases of an expansion of its hot, grab-n-go style

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## Champion of agriculture



Special to The Globe

Jackson County Central FFA Advisor Jeff Voss poses with his plaque Monday evening after being inducted into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame.

## Jeff Voss inducted into Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame

By Alyssa Sobotka

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MINNEAPOLIS — Jeff Voss will forever be known as a dedicated and influential FFA advisor.

The longtime Jackson County Central FFA advisor was inducted into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame Monday, during the organization's 90th state convention in the Twin Cities.

### For FFA State Convention results, see page B6

Quite a few of those people were ones that I looked up to. To be considered part of that group is really a high honor for me."

During his 31-year career in the Jackson school district, Voss has racked up an impressive portfolio. While he's been an advisor, students have earned 204 state FFA degrees, 91 state championships, 35 proficiency awards, six state officer positions, two national championships and one team qualification

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GOOD MORNING

Dennis Uphoff

Worthington

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