



Meet the Jaskiewicz Family

They say losing a child is the hardest pain to bear. Vincent and Joan Jaskiewicz have had to bear that pain...twice. But as parents of four, they have also carried many joys. Here's their story.

After much persistence, Vinnie finally won Joan's heart, and they were married. Shortly thereafter, Joan got pregnant with their first child. Her pregnancy was healthy, there were no complications, and she delivered a full-term baby boy, named Matthew Paul. "Mighty Matt" was born with severe hydrocephalus, and he underwent four major and two minor surgeries, but after just 51 days, he died.

A few years later, Anita Louise "Princess" was born, also with hydrocephalus. She was quite a character, with a feisty and outgoing personality. When her sister, Kathi Marie "Precious" was born, Anita (who was 15 months old at the time) would pick on her sister to no end, because she wanted to be the center of attention at all times.

Kathi, born August 13, 1969, also had severe hydrocephalus and suffered from seizures from day one. Contrary to her sister, Kathi's personality is much more laid back, and she often wants to be left alone.

"When Kathi was born, often kids with diagnoses like hers didn't live past six or seven," says Joan.

Because Kathi's health was such an advanced challenge, her parents decided it would be better for everyone if she went to live at EHCA, where they knew she would be well cared for. She moved in on December 28, 1970, after Joan persuaded EHCA to save the free bed for her until after the Christmas holiday.

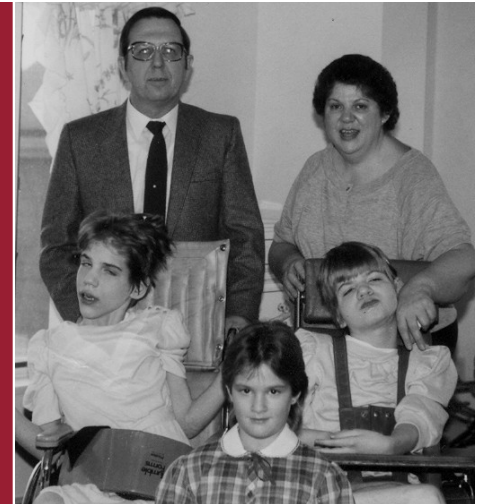
Anita, who at the time, was not quite as severely disabled as her younger sister, continued to live with her parents. She enjoyed taking rides with her daddy, was potty training and learning how to ride a tricycle. One day, when she was about four years old, she had a long, traumatic seizure. It was at this time that Vinnie and Joan decided she should go live with her sister at EHCA.

"When we watched our daughters have seizures and when we made the decision to move them into EHCA, it tore me apart. I went to work to occupy my mind, but Joan was home; that's all she could think about," remembers Vinnie.

Their fourth child, Brenda, was adopted by the Jaskiewiczzes in 1975. Of their four children, Brenda was the only one raised entirely at home.

Anita lived at EHCA until her death in 1996. Kathi, who just celebrated her 40th birthday, still resides in the South Apartment at EHCA; she's been living at EHCA longer than any other resident.

Vinnie and Joan appreciate the care their daughter receives by staff at EHCA, knowing that they would not have been able to provide all the opportunities for Kathi that EHCA has provided. In fact, EHCA has helped all the Jaskiewiczzes live rich, fulfilling lives.



Vincent and Joan Jaskiewicz with their three daughters, Anita, Brenda, and Kathi.



Young sisters, Kathi and Anita.



Kathi, smiling.