6-month-old boy a 'fighter'
By Rick Ruggles
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Logan Nathan's family cried with joy the day they saw him out of Children's Hospital

Logan Nathan had never been home

He was born in March with many health problems, and his relatives in Decatur, Neb., had accepted the fact that he would have a long battle at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha.

Then early one August evening, an aunt in Decatur had the relatives over for coffee and a cousin's birthday.

That's when Logan's parents walked in with a baby carrier. They turned it around. Logan was in it, home at last in Decatur.

"And we saw him and the whole room just erupted with laughter and tears," said Candy Roth, a cousin of Logan's mother, Tracy Nathan. "It was pretty awesome."

Logan, now 6 months old, was born with holes in his heart, no hole where his anus should have been, deformities of the esophagus and other difficulties. Surgeries have corrected his heart and esophagus deformities. More surgeries are ahead for his anal problem.

Tracy Nathan has insurance, but the family still expects large out-of-pocket expenses for his medical care and home nursing care, which is necessary when Logan's parents are at work.

Roth has helped organize a benefit to be held today at 5 p.m. in the basement of the Decatur Community Center, also known as City Hall. Decatur is about 65 miles north of Omaha.

The benefit will include a spaghetti dinner and silent auction for Husker tickets, a day spa, a pearl necklace, a weekend getaway, a flight in a vintage airplane and other items, Roth said.

Logan was born with VATER or VACTERL syndrome. Those words are acronyms for the variety of physical problems that a baby with the syndrome may have, including abnormalities of the vertebrae, anus, cardiovascular system, trachea, esophagus, renal system (kidneys) or limbs.

Dr. Stephen Raynor, chief of pediatric surgery at Children's Hospital, said Logan has had a rough first few months.

"He's been a sick little guy," said Raynor, who is one of Logan's surgeons. "He's a great fighter."

Raynor said Logan has long-term challenges, such as pulmonary hypertension, or high blood pressure in his lungs, and possible difficulties after his anal surgeries. He still receives oxygen, pumped in through his nose.
Nevertheless, Raynor said, Logan has done well and chances are quite good that he'll be a normal kid.

Logan's mother said there have been a lot of low moments and some good ones, including the surprise homecoming in August.

Now, she said, she and husband Bruce are worried about the future and delighted with what they have — a baby boy, at home.

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