

# For the love of Lucy: August benefit to be held for family of an infant recovering from multiple surgeries

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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A poster for a benefit event for Lucy Lucas. The poster has a blue sky background with white clouds. At the top, a dark grey banner reads "Benefit for Lucy Lucas" in white serif font. Below this, on the left, is a photo of a family: a woman, a man, and a baby. In the center is a grey square with the text "We ♥ Lucy" in white, where the heart is a red outline. Below this square, it says "Alton, IL" and "Bluff City Bar & Grill". On the right is a photo of a smiling baby girl, Lucy, wearing a floral dress and a headband. At the bottom, a red banner contains the event details: "August 12, 2017 4 - 11pm", "\$25 advance or \$30 @ door", "\$10 children ages 6 - 12", "5 and Under Free", and "For Tickets Contact: Jessica Hamilton (618) 972-0609 or email welovelucy2016@gmail.com".

Benefit for Lucy Lucas

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**ALTON** - Lucy Lucas is not even a year old, and has already had to spend 296 days of her life in the hospital.

Baby Lucas was born to Katie and Scott Lucas about 10 weeks premature, weighing only two and a half pounds. To complicate matters, she was also born with some defects in her throat, including both tracheal-esophageal fistula (TEF) and esophageal atresia (EA). TEF causes a connection between Lucy Lucas's trachea, which is commonly

known as a "wind pipe," and her esophagus, which is the organ located in the throat used to swallow food to the stomach. Most people do not have such a connection. Her EA causes the upper pouch of her esophagus to not be connected to her lower pouch.

These birth defects affect one in approximately 4,000 newborns, Katie Lucas said.

After her daughter was born, Katie and Scott Lucas spent several weeks with their daughter at Children's Hospital in St. Louis, but some of the surgeries required to get Lucy Lucas back to optimal health could not be done there, so, after treatment lasting from September 2016 until May 2017, Lucy Lucas had to go to Boston Children's Hospital for one major surgery with four separate procedures.

"You do what you got to do for your kid," Katie Lucas said. "They have a special program in Boston that treats EA, but it is a procedure only done in Boston, by the doctors who are in Boston. It was amazing. She went there on a ventilator and came back without one."

Currently, Lucy Lucas still attains nutrients through a feeding tube and breathes through a hole in her trachea. Regardless, Katie Lucas says her daughter is doing great. She is developmentally sound, and is working on sitting, and eventually crawling.

While her prognosis is beaming with promise, Katie Lucas said her infant daughter can expect one or two trips to Boston for the next few years for additional procedures and monitoring. She said some children thrive after surgery, but some require more treatments for as long as a decade following their surgeries. It is too early to tell how Lucy Lucas will respond, but Katie Lucas is optimistic.

Katie and Scott Lucas do have insurance, but constant trips to both St. Louis and Boston as well as the inevitable out-of-pocket costs for their daughter's recovery efforts have taken a toll on them. Because of that, family friend, Anne Stotler, and a committee of several other people, including Katie Lucas's sister, Kari Pinkert, are putting together a benefit for the Lucas family on Saturday, Aug. 12, at Bluff City Grill.

The event, which begins at 4 p.m. that day, will feature a silent auction, a live auction, basket raffle, food from several local restaurants, a kids' corner from 4-7 p.m. and live music from local favorites, the Mondon Band. DJ Monte, a.k.a. Scott Monahan, will be MC'ing the event as well.

"Tons of local area restaurants have been very generous with food," Stotler said. "Mac's, Johnson's Corner, Bluff City Grill and so many others stepped up for us."

Stotler said she has been planning the event for Lucy Lucas and her family with a small committee since May 2017. She said the reception for the event from the entire community has been "awesome."

"We are very fortunate, and I am very surprised by how many people have donated," she said. "The turnout from the community has been awesome."

Several items will also be available at the event, including special t-shirts, can coozies and even fidget spinners made in honor of the cause.

"We appreciate everyone's support and everything everyone has done so far for this," Katie Lucas said. "It's unbelievable how much support we've gotten."