



# Abby Grace Kankelfritz

March 13, 2003 - June 23, 2024

Abby Grace Kankelfritz, who came into the world on March 13, 2003, in Holland, Michigan, passed into the embrace of Jesus on June 23, 2024, in Phoenix, Arizona. As the cherished daughter of Mike and Becky Kankelfritz and a loving sister to Sam, Abby will always be remembered as the heart of her family—a constant, joyful, and patient presence. While some might initially see Abby's disabilities, they never defined her. Her radiant smile lit up whenever she met a friend, and her love of being surrounded by people was clear in her delight when others were near. Abby's gentle spirit offered unconditional acceptance, rewarding those who spent time with her with heartfelt smiles and laughter. Through her father's radio career, Abby's story reached listeners around the country, and her reach was far and wide - even though she never spoke a word. Her family is taking great comfort in seeing the amazing impact Abby's life had on those who knew her story or were a part of it. Her schoolmates were always thrilled to see her, and she made friends easily wherever she went. She was deeply loved by many, from teachers to bus drivers. A cherished memory is of her first bus driver in Houston, Jim Denmark, who adored hearing her laugh so much that he would intentionally drive down bumpy roads just to hear her infectious giggles.

Abby taught all of us how to slow down and be present. If you slowed down to spend time with her at her pace, she had much to share with you, even without words. There was intelligence in her eyes and acceptance in her presence. She was an easy person to be around. She taught us not to sweat the small stuff and to take joy in the simple things that came our way.

Abby was a three-time Special Olympics gold medalist in cheerleading, and her love for people shone brightly when she performed with her teammates. She beamed with delight when near the Christmas tree, playing with ornaments and admiring the lights. She cherished being outdoors and enjoyed going places, but she loved coming home the most. Abby's joy was unmistakable when her dad returned from work; she wiggled with excitement at the sound of his voice. Her deep connection with her mom, Becky, who intuitively understood her needs, preferences, and emotions, was a source of comfort and happiness. Abby loved "Mama's Salon" and being pampered with hair styling and manicures.

Abby treasured time with her entire family. She enjoyed watching NASCAR races with her Papa, listening to her Nana read books, and spending time with her Grandma and cousin Emma. Her bond with her younger brother, Sam, fostered a special empathy in him, as he was always attentive to her needs when she was in his care. Sam himself had a rough beginning, spending a long time in the NICU right after his birth. Amazingly, Abby went home to be with Jesus on the anniversary of the day that Mike and Becky brought Sam home from the hospital 15 years ago.

As her family, we are grateful for the beautiful community we've had the honor of being a part of over the years. Through Abby, we were introduced to so many wonderful people—caregivers, volunteers, helpers, teachers, and medical staff. You are a village of amazing souls who give of yourselves in sacrificial ways, and we have been forever changed by your witness to us.

Abby is survived by her loving parents, Mike and Becky Kankelfritz, and her brother Sam. She is also survived by grandparents Joe and Sandy Chandler and Shirley Kankelfritz; aunts and uncles Andrea and Malcolm Hightower and Christy and Daniel Waterbury; and cousins Emma Waterbury, Juan Barco, Eliazar Barco, and Amy Walling. She was preceded in death by her grandfather, Gordon Kankelfritz.

Throughout her life, Abby faced numerous medical challenges and procedures, enduring many hardships. Despite all of this, she exhibited remarkable resilience. Her journey taught our family the true meaning of bravery. From Abby, we learned how to be courageous. As we said our final goodbyes to our beloved girl, we courageously wished to take on her pain ourselves. The pain of losing her is a burden we willingly bear, knowing it means she is now free from suffering.

This is our testimony from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (The Message): We do not carry on as people with no hope, as if the grave were the last word. We know with certainty that Jesus died and broke loose from the grave and that God will most certainly bring back to life those who died in Jesus.

We know we will be with Abby again. And that all of us, together, will be whole and healed and fully alive with Jesus. And we hold to this hope, steadfast in its truth, grateful for Abby's life, grieving her death but rejoicing in the coming resurrection. Amen.

A Memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, July 13, 2024 at the Mowery Funeral Service Chapel in Owasso with Craig Westhoff officiating. Arrangements and services were entrusted to Mowery Funeral Service in Owasso.

The family will also be having a service on July 20th at Grace Community Church in Tucson, Arizona.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 13. 10:30 AM (CT)

Mowery Funeral Service Chapel  
9110 North Garnett Road  
Owasso, OK 74055

# Tribute Wall

EL

“ *Kankelfritz Family,  
I know you are missing Abby Grace. We lost our son, Jackson in March. It is so hard. The grief is as big as the love. You are in my heart and prayers.*

*Elizabeth*

Elizabeth - September 20, 2024 at 04:14 PM

LW

“ *So very sorry for your loss. I can only imagine what your family is going through, coming so very close to losing my son in a tragic snowmobile accident this past January. Your family is in my heart and prayers. May the Lord bless your family with comfort, healing and peace that only he can give through this very hard situation.*

Lisa Welsby - August 26, 2024 at 10:27 AM



“ *I know your pain and I know your joy the Lord will replace in His time. God bless you and your family. Losing 3 children I understand. I pray your grief will be lifted quickly and find memories replace it!* 🕊️✝️



Carolyn Montoya - August 04, 2024 at 07:02 PM

TM

“ *Tamara Mills lit a candle in memory of Abby Grace Kankelfritz*



Tamara Mills - August 02, 2024 at 09:19 PM

LW

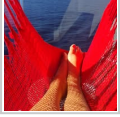
“ *Linda W. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*

Linda W. - July 23, 2024 at 11:30 AM

DG

“ *Becky, what wonderful memories you and your family have of this special angel. She watches over us all now. You and your family remain in our thoughts and prayers.*  
*Donna Germany*

Donn Germany - July 14, 2024 at 06:25 PM



*Hugs and prayers for your family!*

Cynthia Knobelsdorf - July 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM

JB

“ *Jackie and Jon Barton planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*

Jackie and Jon Barton - July 11, 2024 at 06:00 PM

JB

“ *Jackie and Jon Barton purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*



Jackie and Jon Barton - July 11, 2024 at 06:00 PM

DT

“ *Dee Thompson lit a candle in memory of Abby Grace Kankelfritz*



Dee Thompson - July 10, 2024 at 08:20 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*



July 09, 2024 at 03:33 PM

DP

“ Denise P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.


Denise P. - July 08, 2024 at 09:21 PM

MT

“ Micheal and Julane Taylor purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.



Micheal and Julane Taylor - July 08, 2024 at 12:38 AM

 RosalieWi Osorio

“ Abby you are God’s Angel now in the arms of Christ our Lord! We will meet you someday in heaven! Your family will miss you so much here on Earth please watch over them! From faithful Family Life Radio listeners here in Phoenix, Arizona, The Osorio Family!



RosalieWiggles Osorio - July 07, 2024 at 10:34 AM

KN

“ Ken and Christi Newman purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.



Ken and Christi Newman - July 07, 2024 at 12:17 AM

PG

“ Pam George lit a candle in memory of Abby Grace Kankelfritz



Pam George - July 06, 2024 at 06:48 PM

PG

Holding Abby’s family close in prayer. She was an angel and now she is telling the other angels all about her life and family❤️❤️

Pam George - July 06, 2024 at 06:50 PM



“ *Frances Baer lit a candle in memory of Abby Grace Kankelfritz*



Frances Baer - July 06, 2024 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ *I was thinking of the time Mike told about her bus driver in Houston! I was happy to read this in her obituary! I was I Houston at the time and loved hearing about Mike's children. Fly with the Angels Sweet Abby!!*

Sherry Perkins - July 05, 2024 at 11:51 PM

CN

“ *Mike, Becky and Sam...my condolences to each of you and your families, believing full well y'all will see her, again, full healed. Praying for peace and merciful hearts as you all walk this road on earth knowing where her sweet spirit is. Safe in the arm of Jesus.*

Cherie Pearson Nichols - July 05, 2024 at 10:50 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*



July 05, 2024 at 06:01 PM

AD

“ *Ashley & Richard Desmond planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Abby Grace Kankelfritz.*

Ashley & Richard Desmond - July 05, 2024 at 06:01 PM