

# Different doesn't mean less valuable

What comes to mind when you hear such phrases as "special needs" or "disabilities?" Do various differences like Down syndrome come to mind? When you think about these things, does "different" mean less valuable? For me, when I think of "special needs" or "disabilities," what comes to mind is my beautiful stepdaughter and her delightful friends at school, the YMCA's Star Program, and the Miracle League. Being different doesn't change one's value. One of the greatest treasures in my marriage has been my stepdaughter, Katie.

Our new family has faced some unforeseen challenges in the past two years, and I can honestly say I don't think I could have made it through without Katie. Her vivacious, loving spirit keeps everyone encouraged. Katie is in tune with the emotions of others and is quick to offer a hug when she senses someone is sad. Katie loves to join in our church choir for special events, and help sing and dance on youth Sundays. I couldn't imagine life without her. Since being with Katie, I have been awakened to a world that has added color



**CARRIE GUY**  
Values

and shape to my life. Katie participates in the Miracle League, and it has become something I look forward to each season. The game brightens my whole week.

Today, our culture devalues life that isn't deemed "normal." Tests now give potential parents knowledge as to the condition of their unborn child, and offer a "solution" for parents expecting a Down syndrome baby. Unfortunately, we are terminating irreplaceable lives — lives uncomplicated by analytical thought. Lives that teach us the simplicity we were meant to live — the simplicity we had as children that disappeared with the complications of adulthood. You see, Katie doesn't have to worry about what she calls me or what she calls her mom; we all have a role in her life. She reminds me that the best thing we can add to the world

## SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE WEEK

Tulare-Kings Right to Life's Sanctity of Human Life Celebration is at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 22, at Visalia First Assembly Church. The public is invited. Reserved VIP seating is available by calling 732-5000. Admission is free.

is love and a little hope. I believe life is special; it's a gift each of us receives. We all have different talents and abilities, and each of us adds something to our world. Sometimes what someone adds looks different than what others around us add — we may have to look to see it and change our perspective, but when we do, we are better for it. Life should be celebrated because it is indeed wonderful!

Why do I share all of this? This January, in honor of Sanctity of Human Life Week, Tulare-Kings Right to Life is having a celebration of life that I believe all should know about and attend. For those who watched "Life Goes On" on ABC several years back, you may remember the character "Corky," played by Speaker/Entertainer Chris Burke. Tulare-Kings Right to Life is bringing him to Visalia along with Joe and John DeMasi to speak and

sing to us all. Chris was born with Down syndrome but has not allowed that to keep him from being a success. This event will celebrate all life, honoring those with special needs as VIP's. The night's VIP's will receive reserved seating and special passes for autographs afterwards. VIP's must reserve their seats with an RSVP to Tulare-Kings Right to Life — 732-5000. This experience will be rewarding for our community, and an awesome opportunity for us to applaud the lives of those who put an extra smile on our faces. Join us, Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m. at Visalia First Assembly. My family will be there, and I also hope to see yours.

► *Carrie Guy is the Youth Pastor at First Christian Church and Director of The IRMA Network, a post-abortion outreach program. She has her degree from Texas Christian University in speech communications.*