



Joshua Lemacks looks a lot like your average 7 ½-year old boy, but his life has been far from average. Joshua was born in 2003 with a severe congenital heart defect (that he refers to as “half-a-heart”) where his left ventricle did not form properly, among other problems. There is not a cure for this defect, and it is 100% fatal if there is not some intervention. Because infant hearts are hard to come by, Joshua’s family opted for him to have a series of three open-heart surgeries rather than undergo a heart transplant. His first surgery took place right after birth—his mother did not even get to see him before he was whisked away. Joshua had two more surgeries before he was four, and recovery from two of those surgeries was long and difficult.

Fortunately, Joshua is now a fun and active first-grader. He plays baseball and wants to play golf like his Dad (two activities he can do). Joshua has follow-up appointments with his cardiologist every six months, and he is seen regularly by his pediatrician. Joshua’s family doesn’t know what his long-term outlook is because the oldest person with his defect is in his late 20’s, but they work with Mended *Little* Hearts to create awareness about congenital heart defects so that research is funded that might save Joshua’s life.