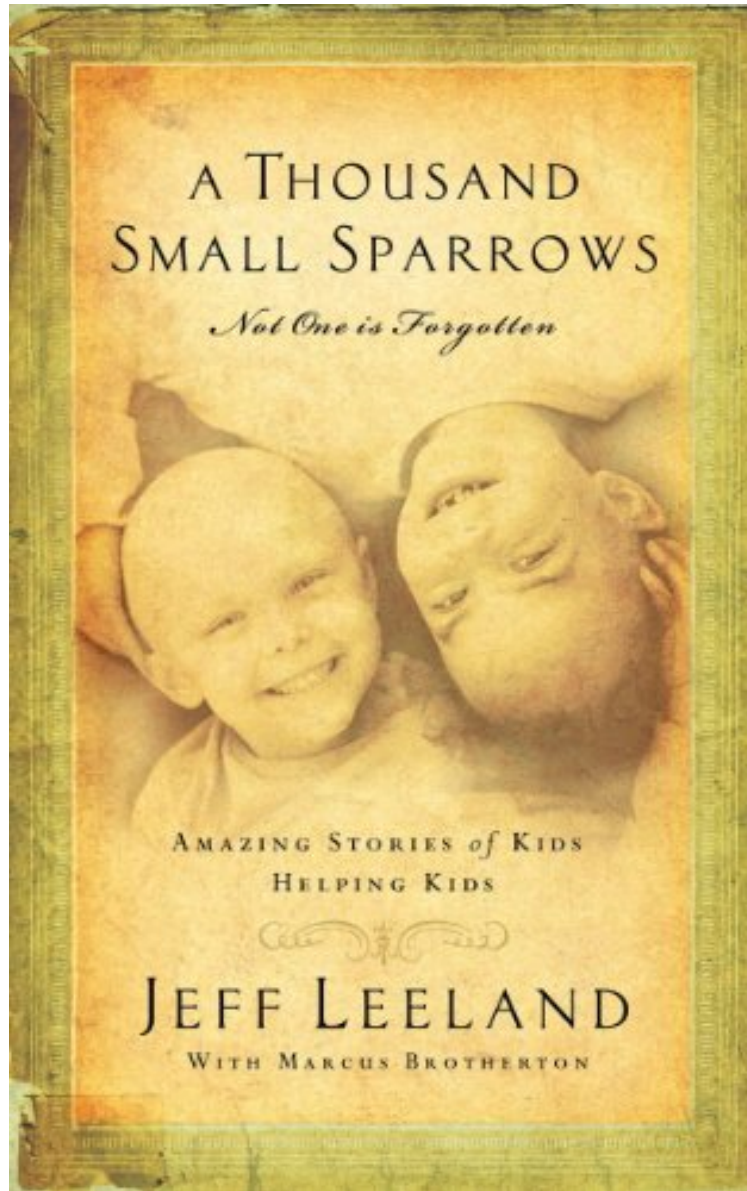


[Library ebook] A Thousand Small Sparrows: Amazing Stories of Kids Helping Kids

## A Thousand Small Sparrows: Amazing Stories of Kids Helping Kids

*Jeff Leeland, Marcus Brotherton*  
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**Jeff Leeland, Marcus Brotherton : A Thousand Small Sparrows: Amazing Stories of Kids Helping Kids** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Thousand Small Sparrows: Amazing Stories of Kids Helping Kids:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. She loved it! By Kimberly Goodreau Book was exactly as described and delivery was fast! Bought it for my 14 year old step-daughter. She loved it! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Character Development" in an Engaging Manner By Linda S What a delightful book! While a number

of the stories recounted in the book are heartbreaking, there are also many stories of triumph. In all the stories, hope abounds. Many of the healings recounted in the book are experienced by the receivers of mercy, but in all the stories many of the givers are "healed" as well... healed of debilitating shyness, feelings of inadequacy, etc. The author recounts the ways that Sparrow Clubs provide kids with opportunities for personal growth by helping others less fortunate than themselves. I have ordered another copy of this book to give to my grandchildren's school counselor. Jeff Leeland speaks of the movement in our nation's schools to develop "character development" programs. Most of these are sincerely developed, but too many are somewhat contrived... long on rhetoric, short on doing. Sparrow Clubs, however, provide kids with actual opportunities for making a real difference in the lives of their "sparrows" and in the lives of their classmates. That changes the lives of all! I highly recommend this book for its content and its readability. It is engaging and informative... a fast or reflective read, whatever the reader desires.

In 1992, Jeff and Kristi Leeland's infant son, Michael, needed a bone marrow transplant. It cost \$200,000 they didn't have. That's when Dameon, the most picked-on kid in the junior high where Jeff taught, emptied his bank account and handed Jeff twelve \$5 bills to help save Michael's life. Other students rallied behind Dameon's \$60 donation of hope--and a community rallied behind them. In less than four weeks, they raised over \$227,000 for Michael's life-saving transplant. Sometimes it's the small who are mighty and the young who are wise. Kids will do heroic things when they have heroic things to do. Out of the Leeland's experience came Sparrow Clubs USA, an organization of kids helping kids in medical need. Each child helped by Sparrow Clubs faces a battle for life, and yet each of these sparrows lives with a vibrant courage. Taking you into the communities that became sanctuaries of love for families in need, A Thousand Small Sparrows will revive your hope in the Father heart of a God who cares. This is a book about the power of compassion that can change the world--one sparrow at a time. One hundred percent of the author's proceeds from this book will benefit Sparrow Clubs USA. From the Trade Paperback edition.

About the Author Jeff Leeland is a popular speaker and founder of the national youth-based charity Sparrow Clubs USA. His first book, *One Small Sparrow*, won the 1996 Christopher Award for literary works that affirm the highest values of the human spirit. Jeff and his wife and their five children live in Redmond, Oregon. Marcus Brotherton is a newspaper editor and freelance writer in Vancouver, Washington, and he holds a master's degree in practical theology from Talbot Seminary. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Jacob the Boxer Jacob's face looked like it had gone twelve rounds. Bruised, battered, black-and-blue--this was no way for a newborn to spend his first few moments in the world. Nine pounds, eight ounces, the scales read. The nurse repeated the information. Lying on the birthing bed, Priscilla Jove could hardly believe it. Her new son was huge--and he was three weeks early. But what did it matter? Aside from the severe bruising, Jacob checked out completely healthy. Her new son was perfect. Priscilla had worried that maybe this pregnancy wouldn't be as smooth as her first two. Labor had been quick this time--only forty-five minutes. The drugs she had been given made pushing sudden and harsh. Jacob fought his way out like a boxer. He arrived glorious, wet, and triumphant, although a bit beat up. He would be tough, just like his dad, Sean Jove. That Priscilla and Sean were having children at all was a miracle. Years earlier, when the couple lived in Los Angeles, they had been dubbed infertile. They had run the gamut of treatments. Hormone shots just made Priscilla crazy. She took them anyway, but in the end--after hot flashes, waiting, praying, hoping, money out the door--still nothing. One day, in desperation, she fell on her hands and knees before God and turned it all over to Him. "Lord," she said, "it has to be from You." Two months later she was pregnant. Priscilla got prepared. If pregnancy, birth, and child rearing were about being organized, she wanted to get an A-plus. She scoured bookstores, devouring everything she could find. She made lists. She planned. She sorted. The couple's first child, Sarah, was born right on schedule. Two years later, the details worked out perfectly again. Another daughter, Libby, arrived like clockwork. The girls were bright, brilliant, beautiful. Priscilla and Sean were thrilled. Still, it felt like a member of the family was missing. Sean is a man's man. He works as an electrician, surrounded by an industry that prizes brawn and heft. Sean's father had died when he was young. Sean knew what an incredible bond can exist between a father and a son. For Sean, having his own son would help heal that wound. Two years after Libby was born, Priscilla became pregnant with Jacob. Their family would be complete. WHEN ALL YOUR PLANS CHANGE For some reason, nothing about her third pregnancy seemed organized. Priscilla had cravings this time--not normal pregnancy cravings, but intense, acute cravings. Once, in the middle of the night, it had to be cereal and cold milk. But the milk couldn't be cool--it had to be icy, crunchy. She put the milk in the freezer before she ate the cereal. A doctor confirmed that something was out of whack. Priscilla was diagnosed with gestational diabetes, a type of glucose imbalance that starts during pregnancy and affects about 4 percent of women. Priscilla knew the high sugar levels in her blood could be unhealthy for both her and her baby. If diabetes isn't treated, a baby can have problems at birth--usually nothing serious, maybe jaundice or low blood sugar, but occasionally a baby can weigh much more than normal. Priscilla took insulin shots. Doctors reassured her all would be well. Aside from the bruising, Jacob was born perfect and stayed on course his first

year of life. He was an active little guy, gurgling and cooing strong and true. His checkups all showed health and vigor. Other than a slight tremor in one hand, all was well. Whenever Jacob concentrated, trying to pick something up, his hand would give a little shake. Nothing big. But Mom and Dad kept a watchful eye on it. Jacob learned to walk right on schedule. Hersquo;d plow along, all boy, pressing forward to whatever he could grab. Sometimes hersquo;d stop suddenly. Not a normal stopndash;more a stunt-man stop. It was like someone pulled a cord on him, jerking him back. Never quite seeing it happen, Priscilla wondered if one of the girls had pushed him down, good-naturedly, as siblings can do. But they hadnrsquo;t. No one was pushing him down. One day, at a regular checkup, Priscilla relayed the news to her pediatrician hopefully, almost nonchalantly. This was nothing, wasnrsquo;t it? The doctorrsquo;s alarm caught Priscilla off guard. Jacob was scheduled for an emergency MRI the same day. He was rushed to the hospital and placed inside the giant horizontal tube for the test. But the MRI showed nothing. So Jacob went to a specialist. Idquo;Maybe a muscle disorder,rdquo; came the reply. Idquo;Hersquo;ll probably grow out of it.rdquo; Priscilla wanted to believe that. She says now that she should have asked more questions thenndash;way more questions. One month after that first round, Priscilla knew Jakersquo;s condition involved something much greater than a muscle disorder. Always boy, Jake reached into the kitchen trash one day at home and cut his finger on a can. It required a few stitchesndash;all part of growing up. After a tetanus shot, though, the chaos began. Seizure after seizure racked Jacobrsquo;s little body. Somehow the shot had acted as the tipping point for whatever had built up in his little system. The seizures didnrsquo;t stop. For days, Jacob was in and out of the emergency room. Nothing worked. Sean took care of the girls while Priscilla drove Jacob the three hours from their home in Bend, Oregon, to one of the larger hospitals in Portland. On the first trip into the hospital, Priscilla watched her nearly two-year-old son take beautiful tiny steps. Her walking son, still on target for a life of running, jumping, just being the boy theyrsquo;d hoped hersquo;d be. Those were the last steps Jacob took. JUST FOR TODAY Hospitals can be helpful places. Supportive. Caring. Healing. Miraculous. Hospitals can also be frustrating. After four days, Jacob was discharged. Tests showed nothing, even though Priscilla now had to carry her son back to the car. Her mom joined her. They planned to stay at a friendrsquo;s house for the night and drive back to Bend the next day. Thirty minutes from the hospital, on the long Interstate 205 bridge from Oregon to Washington, Jacob began having what are known as cluster seizures. With Jacob strapped in his car seat, Priscilla was unable to stop the car on the freeway bridge. They counted perhaps one hundred seizures, one right after another, blows landing on Jacob like the midrounds of a welterweight championship. Jacob screamed with each one. For a motherrsquo;s ears, Priscilla said, it was unimaginable. They raced back to the hospital, but policy said since Jacob had just been discharged, he needed to follow admittance procedures again. Priscilla took him to the emergency room to wait. With Jacob having seizures on the hospital floor, Priscilla reached the doctorndash; the same doctor who had examined her child less than an hour earlierndash; by phone. Idquo;You have to help us!rdquo; she said. Idquo;Sorry,rdquo; the doctor said. Idquo;Hersquo;s not my patient anymore.rdquo; Priscilla was livid. Jacob was given Valium in the emergency room. The family drove across the city to another hospital. Says Priscilla of the experience: Idquo;He was never the same kid again.rdquo; Jacob spent ten days in the next hospital. He had spinal taps, full workups, any test any doctor could think of. All results came back the same: inconclusive diagnosis. On February 22, during that tenday stint, Jacob celebrated his second birthday from his hospital bed. Idquo;The hospital staff brought him a cake, which he couldnrsquo;t eat, and a little Elmo dollndash;which made him smile,rdquo; Priscilla said. Idquo;But it was just a yucky day.rdquo; So they came home. Present day. For a woman who once needed to plan everything, Priscilla no longer considers herself a planner. For more than a year now, Jacob has had ups and downs, but mostly downs. For a while, Jacob still crawled. He doesnrsquo;t crawl anymore. He has problems swallowing. He canrsquo;t reach or grasp anymore. He no longer shows interest in toys. Itrsquo;s a progressive shutdown. The official diagnosis is Idquo;degenerative neuromuscular disorder of unknown origin.rdquo; Translation: somethingsrsquo;s wrong; nobody knows what it is. Idquo;Having a sick kid changes everything,rdquo; Priscilla says. Idquo;I have no control. We went into survival mode. We just try to get through every day now.rdquo; One of the hardest parts is simply not knowing the future. Jacob has had such medical lows that his parents have planned his funeral twice. There are still doctor visits and neurologist visits and specialist visits. They recently visited the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, hoping for something concrete there. They found nothing. Some have even ventured to say that Jacob will outgrow this. But Priscilla says the family has held on to that belief for too long. Some bright moments exist. Priscilla says everyday activities take on new meaning. Going to the grocery store, taking a walk with Sarah and Libbyndash;she doesnrsquo;t take these things lightly. Priscilla and Seanrsquo;s marriage is tighter than itrsto;s ever been. Jacobrsquo;s illness has made the couple go deep. SMALL HOPE, SMALL BRIGHTNESS Sparrow Clubs was held at Sarahrsquo;s elementary school the year before Jacob got sick. It took Priscilla awhile to fill out a reference form for Jacob because she was in such an emotional place. She didnrsquo;t want her daughtersrsquo; schools to be the host school for Jacob. If he didnrsquo;t make it, then her daughters would forever be known as Idquo;the sisters of that kid who died.rdquo; So Jacob was paired with a high school. The kids did penny drives and talent shows to raise money. Priscilla e-mailed the school with updates. Christmas 2005 was the hardest timendash;but also the most poignant. Priscilla had a...