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Shaun came to CGLA in the midst of the most trying of circumstances. What should have been a joyful occasion, the birth of his baby boy earlier that week, was marred by loss and anxiety.

Linda, Shaun's girlfriend of two years and mother of his newborn son, had an enlarged heart and suffered complications during her pregnancy as a result. At six months pregnant, Linda's health took a turn for the worse, and she was rushed to the hospital when she began to go into early labor. When her lungs began to collapse, doctors were forced to begin delivery or risk losing both of them. Their son, Evan, was born three months premature but otherwise healthy. Tragically, the delivery was too stressful for Linda in her weakened condition. She passed away the same day Evan was born.



Shaun was distraught over Linda's death and anxious about Evan's health when he learned from hospital staff that they would not recognize him as Evan's father. He would not be allowed to visit without one of Linda's relatives present and he would have no say in medical decision making. Despite Shaun being well known to hospital staff - he had attended nearly all of Linda's pre-natal appointments - the doctors required either the mother's assent (impossible) or legal certification that he was the father.

Shaun came to CGLA seeking that legal certification that he was Evan's father. Upon accepting Shaun's case, CGLA's Director of Family Law, [Darryl Apperton](#), immediately filed an emergency custody petition. At court, Shaun was given temporary possession of Evan based solely on the probability of him being the father. For full custody, Shaun was ordered to have a DNA test to prove his paternity. Darryl was able to secure judicial funds to pay the full \$525 fee for the genetic testing.

After a few weeks had passed, the test finally came back positive, proving Shaun's paternity without a doubt. Five months into Evan's young life, Shaun finally has legal custody and therefore the right to make medical decisions. As of this writing, Evan is still in the hospital, but he is doing well and getting stronger. Doctors and Shaun are hopeful that Evan will be able to come home soon.

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