

# Angela and Carly Plasteras



If you were to close your eyes and imagine having a baby, odds are you'd picture a single, perfect child. Thinking toward the future, it would be easy to see the daily joys, the landmark events, and the family trips you'll one day share with your child. Now imagine having not one baby, but twins. Life looks a little different, more crowded perhaps, and probably more stressful. Now imagine your twins have cerebral palsy and will need to be supported for the rest of their lives.

It's a hard future to imagine, and one that most parents would not dream of when planning a family, but as April Plasteras says, "if you spend your life mourning plans that didn't work out as you hoped, you'll miss out on all the wonderful things your unexpected life has introduced you to."

In February, 1988, April gave birth to twin daughters, Carly and Angela, both of whom have cerebral palsy.

"Carly and Angela just turned 23 and they've had lots of challenges throughout those 23 years," April says. "We've all had challenges! But the girls are so resilient and so patient. We are truly blessed. Their personalities are very different - Carly flies by the seat of her pants, while Angela prefers to think things through thoroughly. They're a fun combination!"

While her daughters are fun, living in a 1,200 square foot home with two parents, two adult children in power wheelchairs, two assistance dogs and a caregiver was becoming quite challenging. Since April had to give up work to care for the girls, the Plasterases have been a single income family for most of the last 23 years and couldn't afford to renovate their home to accommodate the girls' needs. April admits that she thought her daughters would be living with her and husband Jim forever and that she was scared to think too far into the future. Then they heard about Giving in Action.

Giving in Action provided the Plasteras family with the support to renovate their home; to create a fully accessible suite in their basement, where, for the first time in their lives, Angela and Carly each have their own bedroom and a bathroom with a sink that accommodates their wheelchairs.

“Giving in Action has given us the chance to be a typical family. Our daughters are living on their own and we are now empty nesters ... both things we never thought would be possible. It’s given the girls a chance to feel the independence other people their age have. Angela and Carly have control over their lives now. They come and go as they please, they’re living in the home that they want to live in and their decisions and choices are not dictated by others. It’s the perfect scenario, a happy ending to a story that started off with great uncertainty,” says April.

April’s voice changes, becomes serious when she talks about the relief and security that has come in knowing that her daughters now have a home of their own that is perfectly suited to their needs. She talks about things that typical parents don’t worry about once their kids are out on their own, like the fact that their children will never be able to take care of themselves

financially. Her voice lightens when she adds, “Giving in Action has provided us the security of knowing they’ve got a place of their own. It’s a tremendous relief.”

April laughs at their current situation, “We’ve been living on top of one another for 23 years. Most parents see their kids ease away from home gradually – they start to stay at friends’ places, get their driver’s license, and do things on their own. But we’ve not had that! Since Giving in Action helped us build the addition, we became instant empty nesters and it’s very strange. We thought the girls would take a while to adapt to being on their own, but they took to their new place instantly and Jim and I are the ones who are whining about them never coming upstairs ... go figure!”

Bringing the conversation around full circle, April says, “Our hopes and dreams turned out to be completely different than what we thought they would be, but the lesson to be learned is that good things can come out of situations that you think are impossible at the time. You have different experiences and meet different people - we’ve met the most wonderful people we would otherwise not have met, like the Giving in Action team and we are so very grateful for that.” 🍷