

# Yarah Foyston



**Y**ou can hear the love in Gary Foyston's voice when he talks about his daughter, Yarah. "She has quite the personality! From day one she was always a character. She was born happy, with a great, hearty laugh. And she's always looking around for something to entertain her, something to chuckle at. For instance when we feed her, she'll eat and eat and drink and drink and drink until... she throws up. And then she laughs and laughs. She seems to get a big kick watching all the activity buzzing around her to clean up the mess."

And that is the first clue Gary gives that Yarah is a child with a disability. Born with Trisomy 9, a rare chromosomal abnormality, Yarah will never walk, move or sit up on her own. Gary estimates that in an average day, he and his wife Aya lift Yarah 100 times, moving her from her bed, to a chair, to the couch, to her play tent,

back to the chair, to the changing table, to a bath... and at four years old, 26 pounds and growing, Gary and Aya faced a very real and impossible-to-consider scenario: having to institutionalize Yarah since it was becoming too hard for Aya to lift her so many times a day.

Putting their only child in someone else's care was not a solution the Foystons were willing to accept.

"It's proven that children do so much better at home than in a nurse's care," Gary says, adding, "Yarah has brain damage, too, but it appears to me she's getting better. She learns new things every day. A little bit here and there. You can't trick her. We want Yarah here with us. We want to take care of her. But it was becoming too hard."

Thankfully, the Foyston's were introduced to Giving in Action.

“We don’t have any home care to come in and support us, so Aya had to leave her job and stay home full-time. With just my income we couldn’t afford to do the renovations we needed to keep Yarah with us, and without them...” Gary stops mid-sentence. He continues with emotion in his voice, “There are only two choices — you either walk away or stick it out and do the best you can. There’s a reason God has given us this challenge and we just had to step up to the plate and start swinging.”

Giving in Action gave Gary the bat he needed to hit a home run.

Since Yarah has no ability to sit or hold herself up, moving her around has been the Foyston’s biggest challenge. Giving in Action has allowed them to install a lifting system that makes it possible for Aya to take

Yarah out of bed, change her and put her in clothes – actions that most parents are able to do without any effort, but that require great strength when the child can’t help lift and move herself around. They were also able to renovate and properly equip the shower (Gary says, “she’s a slippery little thing.”), and have a wheelchair ramp and lift added to their porch, so getting Yarah in and out of the house is no longer a two-person job.

“It’s a lot of work having a child with a disability, but what is the alternative? The most important thing to us is that we are able to give Yarah care 100% of the time. The Giving in Action renovation has allowed us to continue raising our child ourselves,” Gary says, with gratitude that is as apparent as the love he has for his daughter. 🌸

