



A home for a hero



Photos courtesy of the Rizzuto Family

Like his namesake, Kael seemed to have “superpowers” right from the start.

“Kal-El is Superman’s real name, his birth name, and our Kael is like our little Superman,” says Reanne Rizzuto, a pretty, polished woman with a warm smile. “I wasn’t even supposed to be able to have him. I was really, really sick when I was pregnant,” Reanne continues, her face darkening. “I don’t mean just morning sickness -- I had colitis and they didn’t think I’d be able to carry a baby past three months. So the fact I was able to carry him to 27 weeks was incredible. And the fact that he was born so



premature but can see and hear and everything ...he’s pretty amazing.”

Once they got Kael out of hospital, Reanne and her husband Edward set to work building a house for their family. It took two years, and when it was finally done they were thrilled. But two weeks later, they got a huge shock.

“Kael had this seizure. We went to the hospital and got an MRI and found out that

he has really bad cerebral palsy in all four limbs. It was awful,” Reanne says. It was hard enough hearing the devastating news about their son’s health, but they also had to deal with the fact that their brand new home was completely unsuitable for their child.

“Kalel needs to be in a wheelchair. He can’t walk or talk. He’s very bright and with it, but everything has to be done for him. It’s like having a newborn forever. Honestly, I can’t work, because he’s a 24 hour a day job. And I want to do it, I want to take care of him. But it means we have to do all these extra things on only one income. People think all the stuff you need for kids with disabilities, like wheelchairs, is covered, but it isn’t, and it’s all pretty expensive,” says Reanne. “And building an accessible home is really expensive.”

Nevertheless, the couple decided to start from scratch again to build a home that would pose no barriers for Kalel.

“The new house will be all open concept, and Kalel will be able to access every room,” Reanne enthuses.



“He’ll have a big bathroom with roll-in shower and a proper toilet for him—because a standard bathroom is quite small, you can’t get a wheelchair in it. And there will be a family room right by the kitchen... it’s going to work really well for us.”

Giving In Action contributed to the start-up costs for the new barrier-free home and helped Kalel’s family modify their van so it can accommodate Kalel’s wheelchair. “The van enables us to be able to get out, to school or whatnot ... we’re always taking him to doctors. It’s kind of funny, other families go to the mall or to the park or wherever, and we’re always off to Sunnyhill Hospital,” Reanne laughs, without a trace of self-pity. “So the van’s been a big help.”

Kalel’s clearly not sorry for himself either. Reanne shows me photos of a bright-eyed four year old who seems to be beaming in every image. “Yeah, Kalel’s a pretty happy, easy going, fun little guy,” his mom says. His enthusiastic attitude is clearly another of

Kalel’s superpowers—further proof that the little boy fully deserves his heroic first name. 🌸