



# Our Comedian

A MinneStory

Allison and Nate discuss their journey through their twin pregnancy and their son's diagnosis of severe hearing loss, which was found through newborn screening.



**Allison:** I think I'll start at the beginning. It started with finding out that we were having twins which was terrifying. Not what I expected at all.

**Nate:** Only because you're in the field and you know the difficulties of twins.

**Allison:** Right, so the fears that I have all happened and came true and we had twin-to-twin transfusion. And so we spent a lot of time in the NICU with two little boys. They were tiny, really tiny babies and it was probably the scariest time of my life.

**Nate:** Emotions definitely float through your mind when you can hold your baby just in the palm of your hand. And the staff there made it easier.

**Allison:** I knew that newborn screening was going to happen before the boys came home. And so, the blood part that all was fine and then right before we were going to get discharged Alex, I think they have their hearing screen on the same day.

**Nate:** Yep Alex passed but then Max was a negative result or didn't have any kind of result. That's when we got we got the referral out.

**Allison:** So we took our boys home and didn't have any concerns. I don't even know if I even thought about the hearing screen again once we were home.

**Nate:** No.

**Allison:** So I don't remember when we had the follow-up. But then I remember once the screening was all done I was just waiting for her to say, "Oh, yep, okay, you're fine, you can go." It was just something like he has severe to profound hearing loss or I don't remember her terms. My immediate thought was he hasn't heard me these last couple months. So I just thought all that time in the NICU and I was telling him how much I love him and I was devastated to think he hadn't heard any of that. I just thought, "Oh, my gosh, how is he going to go watch a movie? Oh, my gosh, how is he going to listen to music?" 'cause I love music. Which now looking back and I know this is really silly, but those were the things that were important to me at that time I guess with that information. The second phone call I made after I talked to Nate was I called my sister. My sister was probably the one who made me feel so much better about everything, because she's a sign language interpreter and has a lot of experience with the deaf community. She goes, "Allison this is not even a disability." And she you know, again, she just kind of supported the idea that he's not going to be limited. He's just going to have a different way of doing things, but he can do all the things. It was, it's amazing to be the people that yeah, reached out and surrounded us. It's like all of a sudden we became part of this new community and started meeting all these people.

**Nate:** Because I remember the amount of information we were given was just overwhelming. And to know there's that much information out there was, it helped me feel better.

**Allison:** Right, so we've come a long way since that ABR that he initially had when we got that initial news. But so we had lots of follow-ups and he was fit with hearing aids in both ears. We have since learned that he probably or he should be able to hear speech with just his hearing

aids, which was incredible to us. Yeah, we still do the little tests. We still call his name and he'll turn his head or we'll say a word and he'll repeat the word. So he's really I think surprised us all. I think just since finding out that he was deaf or had hearing loss just my whole mindset has changed to that initial devastation to just being kind of in the mindset of my sister where like this isn't a real disability.

**Nate:** I don't see it as a negative anymore.

**Allison:** No. No, he'll just be more well-rounded. His brother will be better off for it.

**Nate:** Oh yeah.

**Allison:** Both of his brothers. It's going to be good and he's going to surprise us.

**Nate:** Well Max makes you smile. Oh, man, he's a little goofball.

**Allison:** He is. He's our comedian.

**Nate:** Yeah.

**Allison:** He, his facial expressions will just crack anybody up.

**Nate:** You can definitely tell when he's angry, sad, happy, emotion – he's got every range of emotion that you can see in his face.

**Allison:** I think he makes up for his hearing loss with his facial expression. And again, I just can't imagine if we didn't find out as early as we did, so I'm very thankful.

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