



## Maristella D'Alia

December 31, 2009 - December 29, 2024

Maristella Teresa D'Alia passed away unexpectedly on December 29, 2024, after a brave 10-day battle in the intensive care unit against the effects of prolonged oxygen deprivation following two cardiac arrests. She was born a month prematurely via emergency c- section on New Years Eve 2009. Shortly after birth she was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition known as trisomy 18, or Edward's Syndrome. The medical professionals told mom and dad that she had only a few hours to live. In those precious few hours, Tom arranged for Maristella's baptism, initiating her into the roman catholic faith. He then left Raffaella and arranged the transfer of Maristella [Latin / Italian for "Star of the Sea"] to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in Detroit. Combinations of prayer, hope and medical expertise were joined together to fight for her life.

Maristella's life began with challenges that would test the strongest of spirits. She spent 6 months and 6 days in the embrace of medical care, facing an open-heart surgery, a tracheostomy, and a feeding tube with a warrior's courage. A blanket of prayers always enveloped her from around the world. Raffaella and Tom's prolife choices for Maristella ignited a 7-month clash of opposing views. On one side, there was the culture advocating for palliative and hospice care which focused on comfort in the face of death. On the other stood Tom and Raffaella, cradle Catholics, guided by a deep-seated faith. They understood what many in the medical field often overlook: that God champions the underdog, that miracles are born from hope and unwavering

belief.

In a beautiful testament to divine love and God's Grace, Maristella was brought home on July 6, 2010, the Feast Day of St. Maria Teresa Goretti. It was a day of celebration and hope around the (still standing) family Christmas Tree and manger. The homecoming was an act of divine grace and Maristella was gifted with 14 years and 363 days of life. Her radiant and joyful presence was a true miracle wrapped in love.

Against all odds, Maristella lived a life full of vibrancy, happiness and love for those 14 years. Despite being non-verbal, she had a distinctive way of sharing her thoughts and opinions. Her smile was infectious and contagious and had the power to transform the gloomiest of days into moments of blessing. She had a playful and mischievous side, delighting in lively banter and spirited exchanges with those around her. In one mischievous memorable moment she found herself in a pickle after playfully shattering mom's tempered glass mugs, the whole set! She dodged a "bullet" for her "crime" with her sweet, disarming grin!

Maristella's earthen journey was filled with incredible milestones. At Ann Arbor's CS Mott Children's Hospital, she triumphantly graduated from the home ventilator program at 2 years old. At age 4 years, she joined the ranks of the "tracheostomy naked neck club" achieving decannulation. In May 2024, Maristella completed middle school at the Mother of Divine Grace School (MODG) special services program.

Although gastrostomy fed, Maristella relished in her mom's culinary Italian delights! Those distinctive ways of communication were especially engaging in heartfelt culinary taste conversations with her mom, responding with eager yes or no nods. She treasured the hand holding warmth with her dad, sharing his excitement of sports along with daily TV Mass and live stream adoration

on the internet. Her spirit soared when her brother Carmelo lifted her up high over his shoulders and spun her around, embodying the very essence of joy and unbridled happiness.

Maristella's greatest joy was attending Mass in person. Her face lit up with a serene happiness as she embraced the music and lifted her gaze upwards, engaging in her heaven on earth experience ~ with silent conversational exchanges among the angels and saints.

Maristella adored music, especially the joy of playing her cherished drum. Despite her challenges with dexterity, she managed to tap out the rhythm of songs, her favorite being "Frère Jacques," bringing a special kind of music to life with every beat. Maristella had a special affection for the color yellow and was particularly fond of hard plastic toys. Her favorite was a cherished gift from her sister Rachel, the Fisher-Price Fishbowl.

Maristella was an experienced traveler. She journeyed to Italy on multiple occasions to spend time with her maternal grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins on the outskirts of Verona. She visited St. Anthony's Basilica in Padua and personally met the Pope! She traveled to various parts of the USA and visited family, enriching her and their lives with each adventure.

Maristella's innocence and joy earned the respect and love of all who came to know her. We will all miss her gifts of warmth, light, and grace with which God bestowed upon her.

Maristella is survived by her parents, Thomas P. D'Alio and Raffaella Castagnini; sister Jessica (Montgomery, AL); sister Rachel (Seattle, WA); brother Carmelo (Sterling Heights, MI); Uncle Frank D'Alio, Flemington, NJ; Maternal nonni Maristella Pernigo and Mario Castagnini, Zio Alessandro

Castagnini and Zia Vanessa Castegini, Cousins Samuel and Viola Castagnini (Verona, Italy). She was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents Carmelino Santo (Thomas) and Cecelia D'Alio (Schuylkill Haven, PA) and Uncle Nicholas D'Alio (Schuylkill Haven, PA).

With the deepest gratitude, the immediate family thanks our extended family, friends, the dedicated doctors and nurses: Dr. Glenn Green, Dr. Sean Edwards, Dr. Marty McCaffrey, PA Christina Munn, LPN Denise Bollart, NP Ann Marie Ramsey, her former therapists, caring neighbors, and so many others who have been pillars of support, love, and compassion. A special thank you to Mrs. Laura Berquist (MODG) for her kindness in guiding mom Raffaella in the adventures of Maristella homeschooling.

# Previous Events

## Instate

JAN 4. 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (ET)

SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church  
41233 Ryan Rd  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314-3937  
(586) 726-6911

## Funeral Mass

JAN 4. 9:00 AM (ET)

SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church  
41233 Ryan Rd  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314-3937  
(586) 726-6911

## Burial

JAN 4. 10:30 AM (ET)

Resurrection Cemetery  
18201 Clinton River Rd  
Clinton Township, MI

# Tribute Wall

TD

“ *Maristella, I miss you, I love you. Now and Forever. D'Ad*

Thomas P. D'Alio - January 09, 2025 at 11:02 AM

JM

“ *Rafaella & Family, we were heartbroken to hear of your beautiful Stella's passing. We have watched her grow and smile through Facebook pictures and treasured the light and vitality that shone through even just in pictures. She was a magnetic little girl and she had a challenging, but beautiful Life with the love and family you gave her. Sending you Love and our deepest condolences, Janeen, Hermann and Madhuri Moser.*

Janeen A moser - January 08, 2025 at 10:01 AM

JM

“ *Janeen M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Maristella D'Alio.*

Janeen M. - January 08, 2025 at 09:56 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Maristella D'Alio.*

January 04, 2025 at 04:28 PM



“ *Lord's Prayer 44" Sonnet was purchased for the family of Maristella D'Alio.*



---

January 04, 2025 at 04:28 PM



“ *Sending many prayers to the family during this difficult time.*



---

**Jamie** - January 04, 2025 at 11:50 AM



“ *Many thanks for sharing Maristella with me and the TRIS project. May her memory be a blessing.*

---

**Debbie Bruns** - January 04, 2025 at 10:49 AM



“ *Maristella was blessed to have all of you for her family and you were blessed to have her. Peace be with you. May the love of God along with friends and family comfort you.*



---

**Mary Perkins** - January 04, 2025 at 08:03 AM

LW

“ Will always remember that sweet smile. Fly high beautiful girl. Love Corey Lena and Madison Walsh.



lena walsh - January 04, 2025 at 06:54 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Remebering Stella



James Lo Tempio - January 03, 2025 at 09:00 PM



We don't have any without water marks, but I'm glad we do have some!  
We are all going to miss her!

James Lo Tempio - January 03, 2025 at 09:22 PM

JB

“ Janet And Joe Bolan lit a candle in memory of Maristella D'Alio



Janet and Joe Bolan - January 03, 2025 at 08:54 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

January 03, 2025 at 08:46 PM



“ Michael M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

Michael M. - January 03, 2025 at 04:42 PM



“ Saint-Nicholas-7011-Knights lit a candle in memory of Maristella D'Alio



Saint-Nicholas-7011-Knights - January 03, 2025 at 01:17 PM



“ St. N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

St. N. - January 03, 2025 at 01:13 PM



“ Love, Jan Chiccehitto and family purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



Love, Jan Chiccehitto and family - January 03, 2025 at 10:34 AM

WL

“ Wally, Jenny and Libby purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



Wally, Jenny and Libby - January 03, 2025 at 08:25 AM

JF

“ Joanne Stehr and family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



Joanne Stehr and family - January 03, 2025 at 08:01 AM



“ Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



January 02, 2025 at 09:48 PM

PJ

“ Patti Jones purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



Patti Jones - January 02, 2025 at 08:59 PM

PJ

“ Patti Jones planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

Patti Jones - January 02, 2025 at 08:59 PM

PM

“ Peter M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

Peter M. - January 02, 2025 at 07:51 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

January 02, 2025 at 07:48 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



January 02, 2025 at 07:48 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Maristella D'Alio.



January 02, 2025 at 07:17 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Maristella D'Alio.

---

January 02, 2025 at 07:17 PM