



NATIONAL POLICE DEFENSE FOUNDATION

"Protecting and Supporting Law Enforcement"



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Operation Kids — 877-325-KIDS
www.opkids.org

Safe Cop Hotline — 888-SAFE-COP
www.safecop.org

Project Pedophile — 732-616-9600

MEMBERSHIP

PROCESSING CENTER

732-446-3360 & 732-617-2330

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Nassau County Police Dept.

IN LOVING MEMORY BABY MELANIE MACIAS JUNE 7, 2008 — OCTOBER 1, 2009

Dear NPDF Member & Supporter

It is with deep sadness to report that 13 month old Baby Melanie who was sponsored by our "Operation Kids" program to receive a life saving operation has died from complications due to her heart surgery.

Let's take a moment of silence to remember Baby Melanie and say a prayer in her memory.

The plight of Baby Melanie captured the hearts of our members and supporters, not to mention all Americans who saw her story profiled on ABC and CBS News.

It all started in December 2008 with an email to the National Police Defense Foundation from a distraught 25 year old mother, Elsa Ines Mise, who explained that Little Melanie was born with congenital heart defects that included multiple holes in her heart, a reversed left ventricle that was feeding blood into her lungs.

According to doctors in her native country of Ecuador, if Baby Melanie didn't receive a life saving operation in the United States she would die. We were told Ecuador lacked the expertise and sophisticated surgical equipment to perform such a complex surgery.

After reading the compelling email, I immediately asked the mother to send me copies of her medical records so American surgeons could confirm the severity of Baby Melanie's condition and her eligibility to receive open heart surgery.

I immediately contacted our good friends at the "Gift of Life" Program, an outstanding non-profit organization affiliated with the Rotary Club that is credited since 1975 in saving over 11,000 critically ill babies worldwide.

I began to worry when months had passed and two hospitals declined to perform the surgery. However, in September 2009, our prayers were finally answered when a children's hospital in Long Island agreed to perform the heart operation.

I realized time was of the essence in getting Baby Melanie to the United States. As a retired federal agent, I knew first hand the complexity of securing American visa's abroad.

Moreover, I realized that I must travel personally to Ecuador to convince the U.S. Department of State consular officials to issue emergency visas for both Baby Melanie and her mother.

On September 12, 2009, I spent over 13 hours traveling to Guayaquil Ecuador, along with one of my delegates, Jose Zhaney in hopes of securing the visas and saving the life of Baby Melanie.

"Thank God" we had some NPDF Members who were Drug Enforcement Agents in Ecuador that helped us to cut through the red tape and eventually secure the humanitarian visas.

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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The NPDF is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation that funds the "Safe Cop" and "Operation Kids" Programs.

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When I first met Baby Melanie's family, I had tears in my eyes witnessing the poverty that they lived in. The father, Juan only earned \$200 per month as a factory worker and they lived on a garbage infested side road in a small shack about 120 square feet, the size of one room. The "casita" as they called home, lacked a toilet, proper plumbing, and had a make shift roof. This loving family of four lived in one small bedroom that was separated by curtains.

Please take a look at the pictures yourself and image you, let alone a dying child having to live in those conditions.

I realized the mother's email may have been a message from God that the National Police Defense Foundation had to do the right thing in trying to help Baby Melanie's family.

The next day, we obtained the visa and when I saw Baby Melanie, I realized she was critically ill. Over the decade, the NPDF was instrumental in saving the lives of seven children who were critically ill with heart defects; and when I saw how black Baby Melanie's fingernails were, I realized she lacked the needed oxygen to live.

I brought Baby Melanie to one of our member physicians, Dr. Mario Paredes who examined the child and confirmed my worst fears that Baby Melanie was dying and her only hope was the life saving operation in the United States. Dr. Paredes gave me the airline authorization letter to travel, but told me that there was a possibility the baby might die in the airplane flight to New York.



Fortunately, Baby Melanie survived the trip to the United States; however, we had a serious scare on the plane when she began to go into respiratory distress. The flight crew reported the emergency to the Captain of the Continental Flight who declared a medical emergency and was permitted by the FCC to make an emergency landing at Newark Airport.

Upon our arrival, I was overwhelmed when the plane door opened and I saw such a police presence, many of our own NPDF Members, including officers from the US Department of Homeland Security, New Jersey State Police and the Port Authority Police rushed us through Customs & Immigration to an awaiting police escort that rushed Baby Melanie to the hospital.

On September 23, 2009, Baby Melanie underwent eight hours of open heart surgery. There were a lot of complications caused by the surgery, such as uncontrollable bleeding, and when Baby Melanie was removed from the surgical by pass heart machine, she went into cardiac arrest. Fortunately, the surgeons stopped the bleeding; however, Baby Melanie had to remain on the heart by-pass machine.

Our only hope was that in a few days, Baby Melanie would get some strength, enabling her to be removed from the heart machine to allow her tiny heart to start beating again on its own.

I will never forget that night in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, that very same surgeon who performed the eight hour surgery spent the entire evening bed side with Baby Melanie. What dedication!!!!

Another memory I will never forget was the outpour of supporters and clergy who had seen the ABC and CBS News reports that came and held a prayer vigil at the hospital.

Over the next few days, Baby Melanie's condition deteriorated, her kidneys stopped, requiring that she undergo dialysis.

On October 1, 2009, Baby Melanie passed away. It was probably one of the most difficult tasks in my life to console a 25 year old mother whose hopes and dreams to have a healthy baby faded.



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The next concern was how a poor family could pay the outstanding medical debt they incurred in Ecuador. They had borrowed money from their friends, relatives and neighbors to pay for medical treatment, and now they had the burden to pay for Baby Melanie's burial that included shipping her remains back to Ecuador.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, the National Police Defense Foundation paid for all of Baby Melanie's funeral expenses and transportation back to Ecuador.

On October 4, 2009, I personally brought Baby Melanie's mother back to Guayaquil, Ecuador and reunited her with her grieving family. We were met by Ecuadorian officials, who were overwhelmed by the humanitarian efforts of our volunteers at the National Police Defense Foundation.

I explained that in law enforcement, there is a special bond between the police and children. We see first hand the victimization of children by criminal elements and life threatening diseases and we will do anything to protect our children!!!

While on the 13 hour flight to Ecuador, I decided to write this letter in hopes that our members and supporters will find it in their hearts to make a tax deductible donation to the Baby Melanie Fund.

BABY MELANIE FUND
OPERATION KIDS PROGRAM
POST OFFICE BOX 318
ENGLISHTOWN, NJ 07726

OR CALL 877-325 KIDS TO PLEDGE A DONATION!

These funds will help Baby Melanie's family repay all their outstanding debts and give them the opportunity to live in a healthy environment and care for their only surviving child, 7 year old Anthony.

I urge all members and supporters to visit our website, www.npdf.org and see first hand the many photos of Baby Melanie, her family and the news reports.

Please look into their eyes and help make the difference in their life by making a tax deductible donation.

Fraternally yours,

Joseph Occhipinti
Founder & Executive Director