



## Leo Russell Babler

May 5, 2014 - January 14, 2022

Leo Russell Babler was born May, 5 2014 in Hudson, Wisconsin. After a perfect healthy pregnancy and divine Hypnobabies water-birth, his parents, Ryan and Lewann (Ihrke) Babler, were informed something was wrong with their 7 pound, 8 ounce sweet baby boy.

Leo was diagnosed with an ultra-rare and devastating condition, Rhizomelic Chondrodysplasia Punctata (RCDP), a form of dwarfism, which included a long list of symptoms and a heart-shattering grim prognosis. Doctors promised a short 2-5 year life, full of surgeries, illness, pain, discomfort and general hardship.

This fate was never accepted by Ryan and Lewann, who committed to giving Leo the healthiest and happiest life possible through a myriad of holistic measures and living for today.

He never spoke in words, rather with his effervescent smile, sparkling eyes, contagious laughter and seldom tears. Leo radiated pure joy and pure love with everyone he met.

His favorite place was outside. Anywhere the warmth of the sun could be felt, paired by sounds of the breeze between the pines. Nature was his happy place and moving to Colorado in 2019 provided the best years of his short life.

Leo never took steps of his own, but hiked close to 1,000 miles carried in the arms of mom and dad, always turning heads and charming fellow hikers. It isn't every day you see a grinning 16 lb little boy, beaming in joyful awe of nature, on trails at 7-12k feet elevations.

The summer of 2020, Leo's adventures were upgraded thanks to his parents building out a campervan in their Boulder, CO apartment driveway—providing countless days ending with "Best. Day. Ever." His last two years were full of dispersed camping and weekly day-trips all over Colorado, always including hikes followed by majestic mountainside picnics.

Leo passed away on January 14, 2022 at his home in Fort Collins, CO as peacefully beautiful and pain-free as one could imagine, held by his parents. He wasn't ill, his little body was simply exhausted.

He was fiercely loved and now missed terribly by many whose lives he touched, knowing him personally and virtually around the world.

His parents plan to immortalize Little Leo and his love for nature in a series of children's books. To honor Leo, they encourage thinking of him while out on a walk in nature or, if inspired, donating to his book fund below.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-immortalize-little-leo-the-adventurer>

# Tribute Wall

KB

“ I read Leo’s story in Outside Magazine. Wow! What an amazing testimony of love! Thank you for sharing beautiful Leo with the world through your words. You provided him a wonderful life! It sounds like he was a joyous child! 

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**Karin Bello** - July 24, 2023 at 03:46 PM

EM

“ As so many others have said, thank you for being willing to share Little Leo the Adventurer’s story with us. You were lucky to have Leo and Leo was so fortunate to have two such amazing parents. I look forward to reading the books you write about him to my son and students. Leo, thank you for reminding us all what a gift it is to be alive and outdoors.

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**Emily** - February 19, 2023 at 12:33 AM

MH

“ Thank you for your story in Outside magazine. It is a joy to have read Leo’s story and I realise that the date is exactly one year since your gorgeous boy passed. So poignant. Much love, M

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**Madeleine Hetheron** - February 13, 2023 at 08:04 PM

AS

“ Dear Lewann and Ryan,

*I was just privileged to read Leo's story in Outside magazine. What a sweet, beautiful life. Thank you for sharing even in the midst of your grief. May you be comforted and strengthened in ways beyond understanding.*

*Allison Stewart*

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**Allison Stewart** - February 12, 2023 at 11:36 PM

Jl

“ Leo will be with you forever. You just have to continue to see the signs...

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**Jim** - February 12, 2023 at 05:25 PM

BK

“ Just came across your story and life of Leo. Thank you so much for sharing all the details good and not so good times. As parents you are definitely gifted in being able to endure. In my opinion, that is love at its fullest.

*Bev Kenny 2/12/23*

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**Bev Kenny** - February 12, 2023 at 02:47 PM

CC

“ I just read your gorgeous article about your son today. Leo was an angel. And the story of his brief but beautiful life reminds me to exult in the beauty of the day, wherever I am. Heartfelt, mother condolences to another mother and father. I cannot imagine the pain, but I know that grief is the price of love, and the two of you loved deeply. Thank you for sharing your story.

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**Colleen Craig** - February 10, 2023 at 09:08 PM

AS

“ Dear Leeann and Ryan  
Just a note to thank you for sharing Leo’s story and to offer my condolences. What a beautiful life you provided for that child. Thank you for having his story published in Outside Magazine. I just read it and was absolutely moved! I was having a very low point for my day and his story brought me out of my pity party. He was very lucky to have you both as parents. I hope you take comfort in knowing that one more person was profoundly affected by his life.  
Thank you for your beautiful telling of his story!

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**Amy Smith** - January 27, 2023 at 04:22 PM



“ Leo Russell Babler

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October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM

BL

“ I am so sorry to hear of Leo's passing, Ryan & Lewann. I will always remember Leo's sweet, sweet smile & you his caring & amazing parents. There was no doubt how much he was loved & adored! May your hearts always be filled with all of the sweet memories & adventures you shared with Leo. Praying for peace & comfort in your loss.  
Becky Lease

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**Becky Lease** - January 28, 2022 at 11:25 AM

SS

“ So Sorry for your loss. Seeing on FB & hearing his story, he was a very special young Man. God Bless all. Prayers are with Family & Friends. God be with. 🙏🙏❤️.

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**Sheila Sargent** - January 27, 2022 at 09:51 AM

DH

“ *The only way I knew Leo was on FB. I loved his smiles, I loved praying for him at night when he was going to sleep. May God Bless the books written to honor his life and love of nature. Diane Hester, FB follower*

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**Diane Hester** - January 27, 2022 at 12:54 AM