



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Amanda Vela | (317) 873-1585 | www.zionsville-in.gov | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

For Immediate Release:

Jan. 31, 2018

ZFD firefighter raising money for children's heart organization in honor of his son

As American Heart Month approaches, Robert Coonfield "races" to give back

When Zionsville Fire Department firefighter/EMT Robert Coonfield and his pregnant wife Aimee went in for their 20-week check-up appointment and found out they were having a boy, they were thrilled. With a two-year-old girl, Addison, already at home, they could not wait to have a baby boy. But the doctor noticed something on the ultrasound, and asked Aimee to come back for more pictures of the baby's heart. When the doctor told the parents their son had a heart defect, Robert and Aimee's world changed.

"It was like hitting a wall," Coonfield said. "And the buildup from that point of finding out the sex to his birth – we didn't know what to expect."

The Coonfield's son, Caden, was born on Nov. 13 with [hypoplastic left heart syndrome](#) (HLHS), a complex birth defect that affects normal blood flow through the heart. His heart is on the right side of his body. For babies with HLHS, the left side of the heart can't effectively pump blood to the body, so the right side of the heart must pump blood to the lungs and to the rest of the body.

Immediately after birth Caden was transported to Riley Hospital for Children to be treated in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit. Caden has already had one surgery – Norwood – and will have two more – Glenn and Fontan. His next surgery is currently scheduled for March 7. Although these surgeries are helpful, they are not a complete cure and the Coonfields do not know what life will hold for Caden once he leaves the hospital.

"Between surgeries one and two, it's super intense with potentially a lot of ups and down," Coonfield said. "After the second surgery, babies can be completely different. The surgery can really change the heart. We're hoping that not too far after that surgery, and if he potentially recovers, he can go home. But all depends on how his body reacts."

In between working for Zionsville Fire Department and coaching men's soccer at the University of Indianapolis, Coonfield has found the time and energy to start a running challenge with the aim to give back to an organization that helped him and his family. This May, Coonfield is running the OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini-Marathon – and doing it in full firefighter gear (an extra 70 pounds of weight).

Up until the Mini-Marathon on May 5, Coonfield will run a total of 240 miles as part of his training program. With donations from friends and family, Coonfield will complete the 240 miles. His pledge tiers include:

- \$0.10 per mile - \$24 donation
- \$0.20 per mile - \$48 donation
- \$0.25 per mile - \$60 donation

He is asking that donations go to Mended Little Hearts, an organization that supports and empowers children with congenital heart disease and their families. The organization provides group programs, educational resources, hospital outreach, online connections for families and more. With every donation received, Coonfield hopes to raise awareness about the organization, raise money for the organization and support his son.

“We have been very blessed with the support we’ve had. My idea was to give back to Mended Little Hearts in hopes to one, provide further education for other parents going through this and two, to be able to provide financial support to the organization to give care packages.”

So far Coonfield has received over \$1000 in pledges, with most of them being \$60 or more, and has 208 miles left to run.

For Coonfield, the challenge is about giving back to an organization that helped him and his wife. Early on, Aimee connected with Mended Little Hearts and joined their local support groups. They sent a Bravery Bag and supported her along the way.

“Caden is laying there fighting and I want to do something alongside with him,” Coonfield said.

To support the Coonfields and Mended Little Hearts, [fill out the online donation form](#). In order for Coonfield to track pledges (and miles to run), check the box next to “Donation in honor/memory of someone.” In the “Acknowledgement type” field, select “In Recognition Of” and then type the name: Caden Coonfield. Please use the following mailing address:

ZFD
Attn: Rob Coonfield
PO Box 459
Zionsville, IN 46077

You can also track Coonfield’s journey by joining his Facebook group: [Race For Caden and Congenital Heart Defects](#).

###