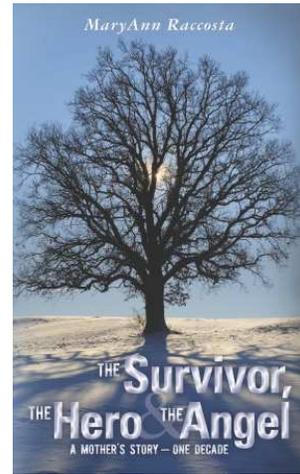


A Review of
The Survivor, the Hero, the Angel:
A Mother's Story - one decade
By MaryAnn Raccosta

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient



Don't even try to imagine what your life might be like if you had to face what MaryAnn and Jim Raccosta describe in this beautiful story of a family challenged with raising three children when two of them are diagnosed early on not only with rare, but also with another extremely rare medical condition. Their secret? A strong faith in God and His plan for them supported by an amazing medical staff at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia and a final blessing of a strong marital relationship that grows stronger as they are forced to work together to keep those two boys alive time and time again.

MaryAnn shares her soul and heart throughout, inviting the reader into their daily family life, from days of routine - a routine very different from what the reader might expect from their own "normal routine" - days that can at any moment turn into another dash to the ER and a hospital admission to save a young life, again and again, with no rest for the weary. Her writing takes the reader on a roller coaster ride of emotions, alternating between that daily routine and death defying episodes where the reader's heart will stop - as the family's did - at those crash cart moments in the crowded hospital room filled with medical staff performing another miracle lifesaving. And so we share their life for ten years, a life that continues on to this day, with the boys growing under the loving care of MaryAnn and Jim, inspirational parents that will leave you in tears with their devotion to not only the three children, but to themselves and their faith in God's plan. See them as they strive to provide a normal life for the older daughter while staying so focused on caring for the two younger boys, a balancing act few can truly identify with in their own family child raising years.

What also comes through in her story is the dedication of the Philadelphia Children's Hospital staff that go beyond their professional responsibilities to connect with this family in a loving, very human way that grows over the years, extending beyond an assigned shift of patient care, returning again and again even after those professionals have moved on to other often distant assignments.

For those facing their own family medical challenges, this is an inspiring read of faith and hope. Medical professionals will benefit from seeing what goes on beyond the hospital room, not only in the home and other physical settings, but deep within the hearts and minds of the family dealing with that daily life challenge so beautifully captured in this amazing book. Thank you, MaryAnn and Jim, for allowing us inside your heart and lives, a truly unique gift from your hearts to all who are blessed in reading this very special book.

Note: **The Survivor...** is available in paperback at Amazon.com. You can learn more from the author's website at <http://thesurvivortheherotheangel.com/> or for a video interview, link to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSUY845VZLA>

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.