

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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## What I Hope for My Daughter: Eyes to See

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## What I Hope for My Daughter: Eyes to See

### Abstract

"I have continued to witness acts of love and care for Reese in the three and half years following her diagnosis."

Posting about discovering empathy and support at school from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/what-i-hope-for-my-daughter-eyes-to-see/>

### Keywords

In All Things, parenting, children, diagnosis, hope

### Disciplines

Christianity

### Comments

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt University](#).

# What I Hope for My Daughter: Eyes to See

Abby De Groot

**September 27, 2022**

*This article first appeared on the CACE (Center for Advancement of Christian Education) journal.*

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## Diagnosis

One Friday in March of 2019, when my daughter Reese was in kindergarten, she was suddenly and unexpectedly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. We spent the weekend in a local children's hospital, discharged on Sunday with an expensive pharmacy bill and a very rough understanding of how to replicate the work of our daughter's now defunct pancreas. On Monday, my husband and I walked into her small Christian school to meet with her principal and teachers to determine how the school—which had no nurse and had never served a type 1 student—was going to keep our six-year-old alive between 8:20am and 3:30pm every day.

This diagnosis had a major impact, not only on our family but on Reese's school. During the first week, a family member stayed at school every day to oversee finger pokes and insulin shots. In the midst of a school year myself, I worked from the teacher's lounge—crafting online assignments for my college students in between meeting with Reese's new team to decide on a care plan. The school held an in-service led by a diabetic educator to help staff understand the disease and know what to do in a low blood sugar emergency. The resource teacher and I wrote a 504 plan. Reese's kindergarten teacher read a children's book to her class explaining her new disease to her friends. We came up with scenarios and protocols.

## Response

Our work and planning during that week helped me feel confident that Reese would be safe. But more than that, my time in her school assured me that she was loved. I saw love in the tear-filled eyes of the cooks as they asked how to accommodate her. I felt love in the hugs of so many teachers, some of whom had been my own teachers when I walked those halls years before. I heard love in her principal's voice as we discussed how hard it is to watch our kids in pain.

I have continued to witness acts of love and care for Reese in the three and half years following her diagnosis. Teachers take care to keep snacks on hand suitable for her. The head cook sends me menus with carefully counted carbohydrates for every meal. Her friends bring her fun trinkets instead of candy on Valentines' Day. Fellow parents text me their food plans for birthday parties. Her PE teacher makes sure Reese sits down when her blood sugar is low, even when she wants to play. The school social worker is helping her work through some of her big feelings. The whole faculty and staff listened intently as I reviewed safety information in another in-service before school this August.

## Vision

I still get emotionally overwhelmed when I think back on that week in March, and on all of the ways Reese's school community has held her since. As her mom and primary caregiver, the hub in the wheel of her care, I have the unique perspective of knowing and seeing all the ways that she is loved by the body of Christ. This big-picture perspective is important. In their book *Teaching and Christian Imagination* (2016), Smith and Feich ask readers to imagine an encounter with two stonecutters at work who are asked what they are doing. "One of them replies: 'I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape.' The other, apparently carrying out the same actions, says: 'I am building a cathedral'"<sup>1</sup>. As a result of these different visions of purpose, each stonecutter experiences the work in a different way and learns different things from the same activity. Similarly, Smith and Feich say that more than techniques and strategies, Christian teachers and students need a *compelling vision* of what it is that they are doing.

I don't know how each of the people loving and caring for Reese sees their actions; maybe as simply cutting stones, just doing their jobs. But I hope they can sometimes glimpse how each of these tiny acts is part of the larger calling we all share, building Reese and the other students into who they are as sanctuaries of God, magnificent cathedrals.

## Hopes

Reese is now in fourth grade. My hopes for school year are many. I hope she finds books she loves that challenge and excite her. I hope she continues to do math problems for fun, and I hope she is a good friend. However, my deepest hope for her this year is that she has eyes to see the acts of love and care she receives at school as reflections of the deep, perfect love lavished on her by her Father in Heaven.