

Shop wireless packages starting at **Free** Free shipping! Online only!  [Start Shopping!](#) Restrictions apply.

Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#) | [Text Alerts](#)

Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Deals](#) | [Classifieds](#)

montgomeryadvertiser.com

SEARCH OUR SITE:

All News Events Jobs More »



SPONSORED BY: momslike.com

HOME NEWS SPORTS OPINION ENTERTAINMENT NEIGHBORHOODS OBITS MULTIMEDIA DATA CENTRAL CUSTOMER SERVICE CLASSIFIEDS FAQ

Local Alabama Business My Life Maxwell/Gunter Dispatch Prattville Progress Nation Archives Education Forums

 **Comment, Blog & Share Photos**  
Log in | Become a member | Search people

Powered by you and the **Montgomery Advertiser**

## Message with heart: 'Notes Left Behind' authors to share daughter's story at Capitol Book & News

BY ROBYN BRADLEY LITCHFIELD • NOVEMBER 22, 2009

[Comments \(0\)](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#)

1 | 2 | 3 Next Page

She loved pink -- lots and lots of pink -- wearing dresses, playing with babies, playing school and writing her name backward because she "just likes the way it looks."

Just 6 years old when she died of the deadly brainstem glioma, Elena Desserich left a lasting impression on all who knew her.

She also left behind hundreds of loving little notes for Mom, Dad and Gracie, her little sister, to find after she was gone. She tucked them away in sock drawers, backpacks, in between books and dishes that had been packed away for a home renovation project. She even slipped one of her love notes into a bag of Christmas ornaments before it was stored until it was time to trim the tree again.

Often featuring her signature pink hearts, Elena's "scraps of love" are constant reminders of her determination and inspiration, said her dad, Keith Desserich of Cincinnati, Ohio. "She knew somehow that one day we would need them to continue."

And many of the notes are included in Keith and Brooke Desserich's newly released book, "Notes Left Behind" (*HarperCollins*, October 2009, \$19.99). The couple will be in Montgomery over Thanksgiving weekend and will have a book signing at 2 p.m. Saturday at Capitol Book & News.

"When Elena was diagnosed, we wanted to try to carry on the lessons and memories for Gracie," Keith Desserich said in a phone interview a few days ago with the *Montgomery Advertiser*. "We started putting our thoughts on paper (a journal that he and his wife kept), but it was not for anybody but family and Gracie."

Their journey began when Elena was 5 and diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), a rare form of pediatric brain cancer that is as elusive as it is deadly, according to The Cure Starts Now Foundation, a non-profit organization that Elena's parents established to raise awareness and money to find a cure.

DIPG affects the pons portion of the brainstem, which renders nervous system function impossible. Symptoms include double vision, inability to close the eyelids completely, inability to swallow and paralysis. Survival is rare. In fact, less than 10 percent of DIPG children live longer than 18 months from diagnosis, he said.

### WANT TO GO?

What: Book signing with Brooke and Keith Desserich, authors of "Notes Left Behind"  
When: Event begins at 2 p.m. Saturday  
Where: Capitol Book & News, 1140 E. Fairview Ave.  
Updates on other Capitol Book events: New Orleans chef John Besh's book signing has been rescheduled for 4 to 5:30 p.m. Dec. 17. Montgomery author Kirk Curnutt's book signing for his new book, "Dixie Noir," will be from 3 to 6 p.m. Dec. 13 at El Rey Burrito Lounge, 1031 E. Fairview Ave.  
Information: Call 265-1473  
MORE ABOUT THE CAUSE

What: The Cure Starts Now Foundation, a federal 501(c)(3) non-profit charity organization with 12 chapters around the nation, established in honor of Elena Desserich  
Cause: Elena's parents, Brooke and Keith Desserich of Cincinnati, Ohio, dedicate their time to educating, aiding and funding the search for a cure for brainstem glioma and other forms of pediatric brain cancer  
Get involved: For more information or to get involved or make a donation, visit [www.notesleftbehind.com](http://www.notesleftbehind.com)  
Buy the book: The Desserichs' book, "Notes Left Behind" (*HarperCollins*, October 2009), is \$19.99 and the proceeds from the book benefit The Cure Starts Now Foundation

### RELATED ARTICLES

[Montgomery couple remembers the daughter they lost to DIPG](#)

### Related Topics

- [Places - Montgomery, AL](#)
- [Life - Thanksgiving, Holidays](#)

Contextual linking provided by Topix



[Find a Dealer](#)

[Get a Quote](#)

Lease a 2010 Town & Country Touring for **\$349 a month for 36 months** with \$2989 due at lease signing<sup>21</sup>  
2009 Chrysler Town & Country Limited shown



See dealer for details

**YEAR END WRAP UP**

### More My Life Headlines

[Business committee for the arts entertains honorees](#)

As he speaks, there's an urgency in Desserich's voice. There's a story to share, money to raise, studies to conduct, children to save. Right now, "Notes Left Behind" and DIPG are on the radar, and more people are discovering this devastating disease through Elena's story. But he just hopes it lasts and will make a difference.

"The second worst day of our life is the day that everybody forgets," he said.

1 | 2 | 3 Next Page

**Comments >>**

Be the first to share your thoughts on this story.

Montgomery couple remembers the daughter they lost to DIPG

**Latest Headlines**

Photos: Montgomery Symphony rehearses for Monday concert

Tennessee man wanted in jewelry store robbery

Alabama plays UT-Chattanooga

Search for second suspect in jewelry heist continues (4)

AL BENN'S ALABAMA: Four careers and still going

ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

**Cincinnati Refinance at 4.25% FIXED!**

No hidden fees! (4.4% APR) Get 4 FREE Quotes! No SSN reqd.

[www.LendGo.com](http://www.LendGo.com)

**Train For Today's Hottest Jobs**

The right training will make the difference. Get more information now!

[www.ITT-Tech.edu](http://www.ITT-Tech.edu)

**New York Life Insurance Company**

Want To Purchase Life Insurance? Consult A Local New York Life Agent.

[www.NewYorkLife.com/ConsultAnAgent](http://www.NewYorkLife.com/ConsultAnAgent)



Watch for Top Jobs coming to this space soon.

**Get Verizon High Speed Internet**  
And Save Over \$150 With





Get It Today!

Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Neighborhoods](#) | [Obits](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Data Central](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2009

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2009.