

## James, Sarah, Amelia, and Alaina in the Year 2012

“...’Twas the morning before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. Amelia was nestled all snug in her bed while visions of candy and toys danced through her head. Then what to my wondering eyes should appear? Sarah in labor at four a.m., oh my dear! We drove to the hospital on slippery roads, to arrive just in time for the drugs, thank the Lord! Then in a blink of an eye, our new girl was here! Alaina Grace is now almost a year!”... (Alaina Grace LeBlanc, born 12/24/2011)

**Happy Holidays to all!** What a wonderful way to end 2011... having our 2nd baby girl born the morning of Christmas Eve and home on Christmas to celebrate with family! It has been an exciting 2012 watching both of our beautiful daughters grow up! Amelia talks "a mile a minute", sings, and dances. Alaina is now crawling and goes after any and all of Amelia's favorite toys!



We started out the year getting used to having another little one in the house. We continued our play-dates with Amelia's friends (Mom's group) and that was a wonderful reason to get out of the house when Alaina was a few weeks old. We celebrated St. Patrick's Day with our good friends, Rob and Kristy, who also welcomed a new baby boy, Jack, in February 2012. We went to a restaurant and enjoyed green beer and green shamrock tortilla chips!



When we took the girls to see the Easter bunny this year, we thought that maybe Amelia would sit on his lap with her little sister... "no go". So, we had a family photo with the Easter bunny, just like last year! This was the first year that Amelia enjoyed doing an Easter Egg Hunt and we watched her excitement at discovering the candies in her Easter basket. James took wonderful Easter pictures of the girls because Amelia was not cooperating when we tried to have professional pictures done...oh the terrible twos, and threes!



James spent a great deal of time (about 10 weeks) in Kuwait again like last year. The rest of the family stayed busy with the Mom's group going on play dates to other's houses, and going to parks and the zoo while Daddy was gone. We tried to Skype with Daddy in Kuwait as much as possible and Amelia loved seeing Daddy on the computer... not realizing that Kuwait is over 6,600 miles away! During the summer, beautiful pictures were taken of Amelia becoming 3 years old and Alaina becoming 6 months old. We thought it was going to be "challenging" getting Amelia to pose, but we did get some amazing shots of both girls. Looking at the pictures of Amelia, she looks so grown up! Around this same time, Alaina was starting to sit on her own and interact more with baby toys.



We celebrated another Fourth of July with Daddy in Kuwait. We went to our old neighbors, the Hazelnuts, for their annual party. It was so hot that day (although not over 120 F like in Kuwait...) that most of the party was either indoors or with Amelia and other kids splashing in the pool water! When James finally made it home from Kuwait two days before his birthday in July, Amelia was so excited to have her Daddy home to play with and jump all over! Alaina grew so much while Daddy was gone too!



We had a very busy August! We took the girls to their first Detroit Tigers baseball game. Amelia even had her picture taken with the mascot "Paws"! We made it to our seats and got all settled in, and then it started pouring! We had nowhere to go, so we ended up getting soaked. Amelia wasn't too happy, but Alaina didn't seem to mind all that much.

Later in August, we took the girls to Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes near Traverse City. We camped for two nights in a tent. Amazingly enough, both girls did really well sleeping in the tent. Amelia had so much fun playing on the

"giant sandbox" and climbing dunes! We also went out in a boat with Rob, Kristy, and Jack on Glenn Lake and went swimming in the lake.



In September, over Labor Day weekend, we all went to Battle Creek



to Binder Park Zoo. We stayed overnight in a hotel, and Amelia loved sleeping in her own queen size bed! At the zoo, they have a really nice African safari where you can get up close and feed the giraffes. Amelia wasn't too sure at first, but she finally fed a giraffe some lettuce! Alaina didn't know what to think, but she didn't mind the giraffes.



In September, we enjoyed a very warm day at a cider mill and nearby park with our friends, Kosy, Ken, and Tristan. We had yummy cider and donuts, and enjoyed watching ducks swim around in water. At the park, Amelia loved playing in the sandbox with her shoes off and Alaina had a huge grin on her face swinging on the swing set! In October, we went again to Wiegand's Nursery in Clinton Township, where we had our picture taken with a seven week old baby lion! Amelia and Alaina loved it... as long as the baby bottle stayed in the lion's mouth!



We had lots of fun celebrating Halloween this year! We went trick-or-treating in downtown Rochester and had our annual Halloween party with our playgroup. For Halloween night, Sarah's Mom made the girl's costumes...Amelia was a chicken and Alaina was a duck! They were so adorable! They both had fun trick-or-treating, although it was very cold and windy! Amelia is now very good at saying "trick-or-treat" and she wanted to keep going to get more candy!



Alaina was baptized at the end of October at the Crown of Life Church in Rochester. It was a very nice service with family. Alaina looked so beautiful in her dress! Around the same time in October, Alaina started scooting all around; now she's crawling and pulling herself up on everything! Alaina comes after and takes all of Amelia's toys, which causes a lot of screaming by Amelia... the fun begins! We had a wonderful first Thanksgiving with Alaina. She even tried turkey, mashed potatoes, and stuffing! We are now looking forward to a more relaxed Christmas than last year, although we do have a first birthday for Alaina to celebrate too...!



Happy Holidays to everyone! We hope you enjoy your Christmas and New Year's, and we hope to see as many of you as possible over the holidays and next year. Happy 2013!

Love, *James, Sarah, Amelia, and Alaina* [www.jamesandsarah.net](http://www.jamesandsarah.net)