



Pilots for Christ is privileged to be flying 12 year old Mia Nelson and her mom Stephanie Nelson from Brewton, Alabama to Mercy Children's Hospital in Dallas, Texas.

Stephanie shares Mia's story.

Mia is a 12-year-old student at Brewton Middle School and the daughter of Stephanie Nelson and Jay Nelson, both formerly of Andalusia. Mia is smart, funny and doesn't let the fact that she was born with Treacher-Collins Syndrome – a craniofacial birth defect that impacts the way the bones form in the face – define her life. Despite being born without any external ears, hearing using bilateral BAHAs and “not looking like everyone else,” Mia has an overwhelming zest for life. She’s a xylophone-playing member of the BMS band who plans to become a color guard for the T.R. Miller Tiger Band (“Go Tigers,” she said!) and a teacher after she graduates. Over the years, Mia has experienced a number of medical issues. She's had a trach and feeding tube – both of which are gone – and undergone a number of surgeries including jaw distractions, nasal passageway reconstruction and some facial reconstruction to repair muscle issues. Now, she's decided she's ready for the next phase in her journey – aesthetic facial

reconstruction surgery and bilateral external ear construction. Mia's case is complex, and there aren't any surgeons in Alabama who employ the cutting edge techniques needed for these surgeries, hence the need to travel to Dallas. There, Mia will meet a surgeon and his team who have treated a number of TCS patients with great success. And we are so excited! And while this is the first step in a long and painful journey, we know that with God's grace, Mia – and all of us – will emerge on the other side with a powerful message to share with the world. I have worked in the newspaper business for many years, both in Covington and Escambia counties. Over the years, I've sat in a number of living rooms, listened to the stories of those who have benefited from the generosity of Pilots for Christ and shared those stories, and this group's mission, in print with the community. Never did I imagine that, one day, I and my family would be on the receiving end of that generosity. We are so blessed to live in a community where helping others is not done just occasionally, but instead something that is done every day, without hesitation.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO PRAY FOR THIS VERY SPECIAL YOUNG LADY AND HER FAMILY.

Wheels up at 6:50PM. May God bless!!