

## Local boy receives hero award from National Guard

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
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Four-year-old Kellen Strauser of Gothenburg got a visit on Feb. 16 from Nebraska National Guardsmen.

They gave Kellen a Youth Hero Award which the guard presents about once a year to a child undergoing a difficult time.

The award is presented “in recognition for outstanding courage.”

Representatives from North Platte’s 1074th Transportation Company gave the award.

Kellen has undergone numerous surgeries for hypoplastic left heart syndrome.

His mother Tawnya Strauser explained that the condition means that Kellen’s left ventricle is non functioning.

Because her son’s condition is rare, there isn’t a lot of data on how long he will live. Tawnya said he’ll need a heart transplant at some point but Kellen’s heart is functioning well enough now that he doesn’t qualify for the transplant list.

The guardsmen drove to Gothenburg from North Platte in a military Humvee to present the award.

Tawnya said Kellen was excited to see the vehicle.

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