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A national nonprofit has announced a Lassen County infant and his family are the grand prize winners in the Preemie Power Photo and Essay contest.

There were nine winners in different categories from five states, Mexico and Israel, but baby Asher Norvell, of Herlong, was named Preemie of the Year Overall Winner, according to a press release from Hand to Hold.

According to Asher's mother, Charlene Norvell, she submitted a picture and wrote an essay. The contest is first based on votes and then a committee including two neonatal doctors, two nurses and winners from the previous year make the final selection.

In the press release, Norvell said, "What he has overcome in his short life is nothing short of miraculous and I'm so honored that God blessed me with such an incredible little boy. His determination through every obstacle he has faced, and continues to face, is such a testament to how much he wants to be in this world, and he is going to do something great."

Asher was delivered in the parking lot of the Child Development Center at Sierra Army Depot on April 24.

He weighed 1 pound, 14 ounces and mother and son were Life Flighted to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

He spent six months in the Neonatal Intensive care Unit and an additional 21 days in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

He was able to come home to his mother and big brother, Landon, Sept. 16.

Norvell said doctors told her Asher is thriving at home.

She said he gets more attention and it's nice being able to keep an eye on him.

Asher will be 8 months old on Christmas Eve.

Norvell said he is reaching his milestones, but weighing 8 pounds, 3 ounces he needs to gain weight.

"He is the happiest baby I've ever known. If it weren't for the trachea (tube), he would be the easiest baby. He smiles all the time," she said.

Asher has a trachea tube due to paralyzed vocal cords.

Norvell also noted how Landon is a great big brother.

Asher's story garnered a lot interest even from people living in Scotland and Europe, according to Norvell.

She said people still send her messages about the impact her son has had on their life.

Norvell expresses her appreciation for all of the support and "just the love for my boys. It just blows me away."

Hand to Hold serves NICU families nationwide and provides comprehensive navigation resources and

support programs to parents of preemies, babies born with special health care needs and those who have experienced loss due to complications.