



## Winter Issue

### Inside this issue:

<i>A graduate's story</i>	2 and 4
<i>Nutrition Corner</i>	2
<i>Resources in the Community</i>	3
<i>The Children's Hospital</i>	3
<i>Did you Know?</i>	5
<i>Keeping Baby Safe</i>	5
<i>Education Hours</i>	6
<i>Creative Activities</i>	6

### Congratulations on the birth of your baby

Let's celebrate the new life that has joined your family. Your baby is beautiful and has unique gifts.

But the wonderful time you imagined for so long has taken an unexpected turn. Perhaps your baby was born too soon, or perhaps your baby came when due, but with health problems. You may feel frightened and overwhelmed. Know that your feelings are normal and shared by many other parents in the NICU.

Also know that your presence is important and special to your baby. Your baby will learn the sound of your voice and your unique touch. These gifts will encourage your baby

to become stronger and move toward being healthier. You provide comfort to your baby in ways that no one else can. Your little one needs you and you have a valuable role in the NICU.

March of Dimes NICU Family Support® provides comfort and information to families, like yours, during your baby's NICU stay. Please join other families in our activities and let us know how we can best help you.

This newsletter is intended to provide you with helpful information regarding the NICU, support services available to you and your family, tips about leading a healthy lifestyle, and upcoming events.

### Did you know?

1 in 10 babies in the United States are born prematurely.

1 in 7 babies are born prematurely in South Carolina .

### Who's Who

#### Your Baby's Doctors

- Dr. Benton Cofer
- Dr. Reese Clark
- Dr. Shivani Desai
- Dr. Catrinel Marinescu
- Dr. Robert Newell
- Dr. Bryan Ohning
- Dr. Jeff Ruggieri
- Dr. Whit Walker
- Dr. David Wells

#### Your Baby's Neonatal Nurse Practitioners:

- Dawn Allen
- Deb Baldwin
- Karen Covington
- Debra Lynch
- Ara Messamer
- Treasure Snyder
- Kyle Weir
- Charlene Wells
- Catherine Wilson

#### Your Nurse Supervisors:

- Monica Kates
- Debbie Ingram
- Karen Merritt
- Sharon Moore

#### Your Nurse Managers:

- Jennifer Griffin (NICU 1)
- Neta Greenlied (NICU 2)

#### Your Social Workers

- Gretchen Humerickhouse
- Debra Tate



## A NICU graduate's story



In September of 2000, after a week in the hospital of trying to stop labor, Lori was born at twenty five weeks on September 17<sup>th</sup>. She weighed one pound fourteen ounces and was thirteen and three quarter inches long. After three days of staying in the hospital they released me and we had to go home and leave her in the NICU. When you're expecting a baby the most exciting day is the day you deliver your child and you want to celebrate with your family and friends, but when you have a baby that goes into the NICU you have to leave them at the hospital knowing

there is nothing you can do but hope and pray because you feel helpless. Her eyes were still fused together when she was born. At four days old her father went to see her in the hospital. When he was visiting he saw Lori had been put on the oscillator and had opened one eye. Lori was six days old when they told us she had an abdominal infection. They informed us they had to perform surgery. They didn't know if she had a perforated bowel or it was NEC. We sat down in front of a panel of doctors and nurses that had been taking care of her and they discussed her condition between the immaturity of her lungs, the abdominal

infection, and the ultra sound of her brain. She had a grade one brain bleed on the left side and a grade two on the right. At a later date they did another ultra sound and the brain bleeds had disappeared. They said if they went in for surgery and the infection was too great or she had NEC that we would have to discuss staking her off life support. I remember praying and telling God he could take twenty years of my life if he'd just let her live and play like a little child should be able to play. Dr. Gauderer performed her surgery. He made her a double ostomy and she had a colostomy bag until she was two

*Continued on page 4.....*

## The Nutrition Corner

Human Breast Milk has multiple benefits for infants and mothers. Some specific benefits for the premature infant include:

- Added protection from sepsis and other infections
- A decrease in chronic lung disease and ROP (retinopathy of prematurity)
- A decrease of incidence and severity of NEC (necrotizing enterocolitis)
- A reduction in hospital length of stay
- Protection of the "Enteromammary System" - Skin: skin contact between mom and pre-term infant can induce the mother to make specific antibodies against the nosocomial pathogens in their infants environment and pass these through her milk
- Pre-term milk has increased nitrogen, total protein, immune proteins, total lipids, medium-chain fatty acids, total energy, some vitamins and minerals
- Increased concentration of growth factors, hormones to aid in the development of gut and organs, live infection fighting cells.



**If you have questions about pumping or breast-feeding, call Mary Beth Collins Lactation Consultant at 455-1694**

## Resources in the Community

### Finding a Pediatrician

Your child's pediatrician is your partner in promoting your child's health and development. You should feel comfortable with your choice. If you have not chosen a pediatrician or you are thinking about changing your pediatrician, ask your social worker for a list of local pediatricians. Also, ask friends and other parents you respect for suggestions.

Below are some specific questions to ask when looking for a pediatrician:

- What is your pediatric background?
- Do you have a subspecialty or area of pediatric interest?
- When are your office hours?
- Are you part of a group practice
- How do I reach you after-hours or during an emergency?
- If I have a minor question, when is the best time to call?
- Can we call with questions that wouldn't require an office visit?
- Do you charge for such "telephone time?"
- How long is a typical office visit?
- What hospitals do you use, and what HMOs do you work with?
- Is payment due at the time of visit?
- How do you support breastfeeding
- When will I bring in my baby for the first office visit?
- Are you board certified through the American Board of Pediatrics?
- Are you a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics?
- How well do you know the infant and toddler programs in the community?

## What's Happening at the Children's Hospital



The annual Children's Hospital Virtual Toy Drive is going on now. Over the years, the NICU has received special items (bouncy seats, CD players, mobiles) through this effort.. vided through this special annual event. All items that are part of this year's virtual toy drive have been identified by Children's Hospital staff as needed to help us in our efforts to go beyond providing traditional medical care. Share with family and friends how they can make a difference for a baby or child at the Children's Hospital of Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center. Visit [www.virtualtoydrive.org](http://www.virtualtoydrive.org) to see the items featured on this year's Virtual Toy Drive. As a donor, you select and pay for an item and we take care of securing and distributing the item. Any items you select are needed and very much appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Virtual Toy Drive and for helping to make a difference!





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months old. Her infection was very severe. He was gravely concerned but we would hope for the best. For the next four weeks she would be on as many as five antibiotics at a time.

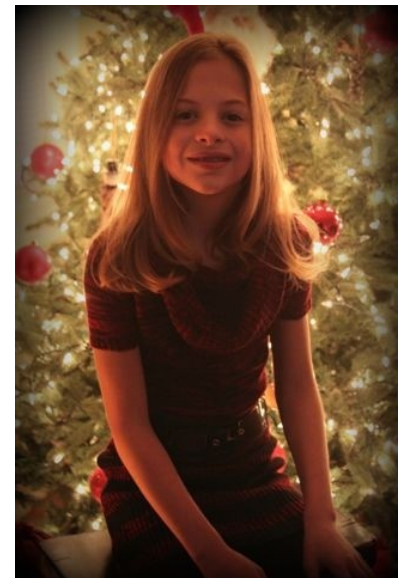
Lori stayed on the oscillator for two weeks. At thirteen days old, on September 30<sup>th</sup>, the doctors called at home while I was taking care of Lori's older sister Emily, and said they were moving her to a different bed and that somebody had to hold her and it might as well be me. It was the first time I had got to hold her since she had been born. I was excited to be able to hold her for the first time, where I had only gotten to see her face for a few seconds when she was born before they took her away to the NICU. She was still very small and very sick and we had a long road ahead of us. She went on cpap at three weeks old. After she went on cpap, she pretty much existed with good days and bad days with ups and downs until they reversed her ostomy. It was right before Thanksgiving. The reversal of her ostomy was her second surgery and she was only two months old. I didn't realize how much I was worrying until the next day. I had sheer exhaustion. I was worried she wouldn't come off the ventilator after surgery and she wouldn't tolerate

the surgery well. She did well in surgery. She only stayed on the ventilator for less than twenty four hours. She tolerated surgery well, but had trouble keeping her temperature up and being strong enough to take her bottles without NG feedings. She took NG feedings until a week after her surgery but Lori was weak from anemia. She had four blood transfusions throughout her time in the hospital. Her last one was four days before she got out of the hospital. I remember she was pink and rosy all over after the last transfusion.

Lori went home on December the 13<sup>th</sup>, weighing four pounds and one ounce. Two days before mine and Brian's 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and sixteen days before her original due date. That made for one of the most blessed and wonderful Christmas' we've ever had. Little did we know we had another child on the way. When Lori came home she was small, but grew quickly. She never had pneumonia until she was four. When she was eight months old she was released from physical therapy.

Now she is 11 and is a bright, funny, and smart girl. She is doing well in

school. She is an everyday average eleven year old kid. When you're in the NICU, it seems like you'll be in there forever and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. When they come out of the NICU life starts happening and they grow up fast. Every child is a true blessing from God and I believe that NICU babies are touched by the angels in a special way.



Lori Porter, age 11





## Did you Know?

The Women’s Boutique is located on the 6th floor of Greenville Memorial , to the right of the visitor elevators. The Women’s Boutique offers a variety of breastfeeding supplies and clothing for nursing mothers. The Boutique also sells sleep sacks, 2 models of car seats, baby slings, books, DVDs and other items for new infants.



**Smoking Cessation**  
Tuesdays 1:30-3  
(Heartlife at Greer)  
Tuesdays 6:30-8  
(Life Center)  
Call 455-1540 for more information

Hours of operation are 9-4, Monday through Friday.

Your voice is comforting and soothing to your baby. Ask your nurse to borrow a book from the NICU Bedside Reading Cart .

## Keeping Your Baby Healthy

Babies in the NICU are especially vulnerable to germs and infections. Infections are the most common reason for complications during a NICU stay. Help us keep your baby safe from infections by keeping your hands clean and making sure that everyone that touches your baby also uses good hand-washing techniques. The following tips will help keep your baby safe and healthy.

- Hand-washing sinks are located at each NICU entrance and throughout the unit. Waterless soaps are also
- Waterless soap is also located through the unit and at each bedside.
- Make sure you wash your hands before and after touching your baby. Push sleeves up when washing hands.
- Please ask any NICU nurse or staff member to clean their hands if you do not see them do it.
- Cell phones can be very dirty. Please do not use your cell phone when holding your baby and make sure you wash your hands after you have touched your phone.
- If you wear fake fingernails, jewelry or clothing below the elbows, please remove these when in the NICU.

**Flu Season is Here!**  
Flu Shots are strongly recommended for family members caring for infants.  
Talk to your doctor about getting a flu shot to help protect your baby from the flu .



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 NICU Family Support Specialists  
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 rbalck@marchofdimes.com  
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 www.ghschildrens.org  
 NICU Direct (864) 455-7165

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We carry out this mission through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives.

NICU Family Support® is a comprehensive set of services, developed and launched to provide information and comfort to families during the NICU hospitalization of their newborn. NICU families receive information and materials about the NICU experience and have access to services and activities that provide support within the NICU setting.

Additional resources for NICU families can be found at [marchofdimes.com/nicu](http://marchofdimes.com/nicu). Also, visit [ShareYourStory.org](http://ShareYourStory.org), our online community for NICU families.

## Family activities...please join us!

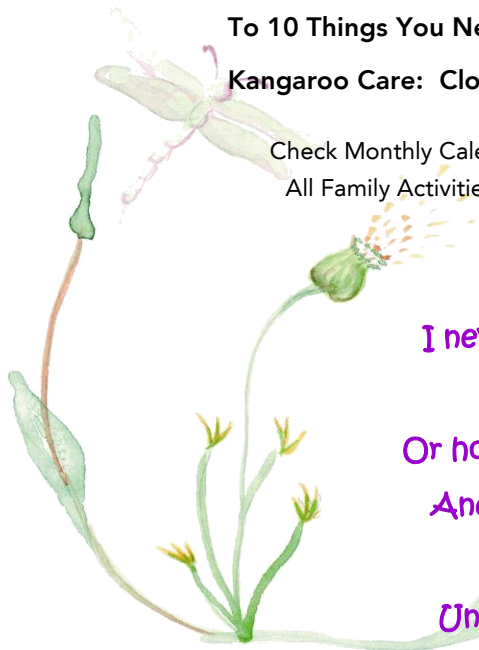
### Education Hours

- Feeding Your Baby
- Connecting with Your Baby
- Just for Dads
- Just for Grandparents
- To 10 Things You Need to Know
- Kangaroo Care: Close to Me

### Creative Hours

- Scrapbooking
- Healing Bracelets
- Sibling Sunday
- Sibling Game Night

Check Monthly Calendars at both NICU Entrances for specific dates and times.  
 All Family Activities are held in NICU 2 Conference room and free of charge



Until I was a parent,  
 I never truly understood the miracle of life.  
 Like how a hand could be so tiny  
 Or how a cheek could feel so soft to my kisses  
 And how a little head could smell so good.  
 And feel so warm against my face.  
 Until I was a parent, I never truly realized  
 That a tiny baby could fill my heart with so much love.

- Lee Franklin

