

nicu Family News



The NICU Family News is produced by the Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Family Advisory Council (FAC). It is designed to provide you with information we hope you will find useful during and after your family's stay in the NICU.

DID YOU KNOW...

September 18, 2018, marks the first anniversary of our move into the Cooperman Family Pavilion and of taking care of all the special babies in our new NICU. Families have appreciated all the space and modern comforts to help bond with their babies and the staff are looking forward to another year of caring for the babies in this technologically advanced environment.

Read To Your Baby

Former NICU parents often say how helpless they felt at times while their baby was in the NICU. The nurses at SBMC have been focusing in recent years on encouraging and supporting parents to hold their babies and be involved in their care whenever possible, to try to cut down on this feeling some. Also in the last few years, research has shown that reading out loud to sick and premature babies brings extra special benefits to the babies as well as their parents.


For NICU parents, reading out loud to baby is a way to be involved with them in a positive way that is not medical but rather a "normal" thing a parent would do with a baby. Often, reading this way to babies in the NICU helps parents bond and feel a little bit "closer" to their baby. It's also something the parents can do for their baby at a time when they may feel as if there might not be much more they can do in the NICU.

Very important research also shows that babies in the NICU have important brain development going on and reading to these babies helps aid in this development. Believe or not, it seems it is helpful to both speak to your baby AND read out loud to them. Neonatologists at a NICU in Boston found it so important that they set a goal for parents, or other family members, to read to their NICU baby at least once every day. Research also shows that from birth and beyond, in addition to advancing brain development, language skills, and vocabulary, reading out loud can also build listening and memory skills over time.

So, bring a few books to the NICU and try to read to your baby each day. You will be glad you did! If you want to read out loud to your baby in your native language, please do so. In the near future, graduate NICU parents will try to help ensure that all parents receive a board book to read to their baby as part of a new welcome bag. Until then, here are some good books you can get that they liked to read to their babies in the NICU:

1. Goodnight Moon
2. The Very Hungry Caterpillar
3. Guess How much I love You?
4. Five Little Monkeys
5. Llama Llama Nighty-Night
6. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
7. Where is Spot?
8. Jamberry
9. Good Night Gorilla
10. Moo, Baa, La, La, La!
11. The Colors of Us
12. If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

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The SBMC NICU is now on Facebook
www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU 

94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston, NJ 07039
 1-888-724-7123 rwjbh.org/sbmc

Interview With Elizabeth Bennett

Director of Special Events for Saint Barnabas Medical Center

Q: Can you tell us about your role/what you and your department do?

A: I work for the Development Department and in my role, I manage and direct all fundraising events. We run golf outings, dinners, galas and walks, like Miracle Walk, to raise funds for the Medical Center throughout the year. Events support areas like the NICU but also cardiac care, our cancer centers, pediatric epilepsy and The Burn Center.

Q: How long have you been working at SBMC?

A: I have been working here for three years and this October will be my fourth Miracle Walk.

Q: Specifically what is your role in regard to the Miracle Walk?

A: I am the staff person dedicated to making this event happen. I work with the Miracle Walk committee - made up of NICU graduate families - to plan the event and then I manage all the logistics and fundraising. I write the Miracle Monday Newsletters and set up and provide help for www.miraclegwalk.com. I also coordinate sponsors, registration, volunteers, etc.

Q: What can people who have never attended Miracle Walk expect that day?

A: Families come out to a great, family friendly, day in Verona Park where they can visit with the nurses and doctors who cared for them during their stay in the NICU. There are activities for the whole family including face painting, balloon artists, a DJ, your child's favorite characters (this year Elsa and Superman are rumored to be visiting) and more! It's fun for you AND for your neighbors, co-workers, friends and family!

Q: What have you liked the most about working on the Miracle Walk event?

A: I love meeting and hearing about the teams and their Miracles! I think it is amazing work what our physicians and nurses do every day and they really are miracle workers.

Q: Where does the money raised from Miracle Walk go?

A: The money goes directly to supporting the NICU at Saint Barnabas Medical Center. Due to the success of Miracle Walk, the NICU at Saint Barnabas Medical Center has been able to purchase state-of-the-art equipment such as Giraffe® Omnibeds®, NeoPuff™ infant resuscitators, neoBLUE™ LED phototherapy lights and Draeger Air-Shields® Isolette® infant transporters. In 2017, the NICU expanded to five times its size into the new Cooperman Family Pavilion. The result is more than 37,500 square feet of modern, comfortable, infant care and family space!



Elizabeth Bennett

Q: Do you have any specific tips for registering, fundraising and/or attending the Miracle Walk?

A: Share, share, share! Our website (www.miraclegwalk.com) is super easy to use to register and FUN to customize. Make a team! You can make your own page with your own photos and then keep sharing with family and others. There are sample emails on our website that you can just forward. Remember it usually takes about three to four asks before a person will donate to your team. Also, there is a toolkit on the site for team captains loaded with LOTS of tips! If you would like one mailed contact me at 973-322-4305 or Elizabeth.Bennett@rwjbh.org. As for attending, please try to get there early - there is plenty to do and eat. The parking availability gets farther and farther from the park the later you wait.

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SBMC NICU “Two-Timers!”

We are a two-time SBMC NICU family: our oldest daughter, Melanie, was born at 34 weeks and our little one, Cecelia, was born at 30 weeks. Aside from the premature deliveries, both pregnancies had been healthy and uneventful up until the day I went into labor.

With Melanie, I didn't know what to expect of contractions and labor so I didn't pay much attention to my earliest contractions and assumed they were third-trimester aches and pains. My husband and I went about our Saturday running errands, doing chores, and napping. Within a few hours; however, the aches and pains were growing stronger and my doctor advised me to head to the hospital. We arrived at SBMC around 6:00 pm and by 9:00 pm, Melanie had arrived. She was 4 lbs., 6 oz. and 17.5 inches long. My husband and I were able to briefly hold Melanie before she was whisked off to the NICU. Melanie spent an uneventful week in the NICU before coming home.

With Cecelia, I did know what to expect of labor, but was still completely thrown when I started having contractions at 30 weeks. Given my history, my doctor sent me to SBMC right away. There, efforts were made to stop my contractions but they were not successful. Cecelia arrived weighing 3 lbs., 12 oz. and was 17 inches long. We were unable to hold Cecelia for the first 72 hours of her life to safeguard against brain bleeds. The four additional weeks I lost from my second pregnancy made a huge difference. Unlike Melanie, Cecelia was hooked up to so many tubes and sensors. Even though we had been through the NICU



Melanie and Cecelia in the NICU and now!



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18th Annual Miracle Walk To Benefit the SBMC NICU

Sunday, October 7, 2018
9:00 am at Verona Park

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER:
MIRACLEWALK.COM ■ 973-322-4259
FACEBOOK.COM/MIRACLEWALK



Important Phone Numbers:

- NICU
973-322-5300
- NICU Nurse Manager
973-322-8938
- NICU Social Worker
973-322-5503
- NICU Case Managers
973-322-5909
973-322-2678
- Birth Certificate Office
973-322-5327
- Lactation Consultants
973-322-9088
- NICU High Risk Infant
Follow-Up Program
973-322-2631

Want to Help the Family Advisory Council?

The FAC is made up of graduate parents dedicated to helping new NICU parents. We meet monthly to discuss ways to do this. We're always looking for recent graduate parents to share their experiences and ideas to make our NICU the best it can be. We welcome your ideas and participation. Contacts:

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SBMC NICU "Two-Timers!" (continued from page 3)

before, it was a little overwhelming. Cecelia spent six weeks in the NICU, where she had an infection and the flu, and had to learn to eat. Due to having had the flu, Cecelia came home on a breathing monitor, which she used for about a month.

Now three years old and 18 months old, Melanie and Cecelia are healthy, happy, smart, sweet little girls. While it was never something I considered when I chose an obstetrician affiliated with SBMC, I am so grateful to have delivered my girls at a hospital with such a high quality NICU. I have even come to think of our time in the NICU as a blessing in disguise - the "instruction manual" most new parents wish their babies came with. Indeed, both of our daughters came home from the NICU on sleep/eating schedules that were well-established, I received extra help from the NICU lactation consultants and was able to successfully nurse both our girls, and my husband and I participated in new parent classes and infant CPR training, which helped us to feel more confident when we brought our girls home. The support our family received from the SBMC NICU doctors, nurses, and staff was invaluable! Thank you to them all! **-Lisa K.**

Interview With Elizabeth Bennett (continued from page 1)

Q: Is there anything else you would like people to know about the Miracle Walk?

A: The walk is driven by families whose children were in the NICU. It is so important that we keep that tradition alive. Please feel free to keep telling me what you would like to see at the walk every year. Teams are the heart to our success so please continue to invite family and friends to come out and donate to Miracle Walk.

Q: Anything else you would like to add?

A: We love to share Miracle Stories about your NICU kids. Please reach out to me at Elizabeth.Bennett@rwjbh.org to share yours. Check your inbox for Miracle Monday Newsletters and like us on Facebook. You could be the next highlighted on Team Tuesday or Miracle Monday! The walk is a busy and fun day, but please try to stop me and say hi! I would love to meet you all in person and meet your miracle child or children.