

nicu Family News



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

DID YOU KNOW...

You can have a hospital based professional photographer come to your baby's NICU room to take photos of your baby, or you and your baby, just before discharge? See the Bella Baby information cards in the NICU Family Lounge for details and a QR code to scan. Or, text Bella Baby at 862-420-0845 to schedule your photo session or ask any questions you might have. There is no cost for the session, just for the photos if you choose to buy them.

The Miracle Walk Returns in Person!

On the morning of October 9, 2022, the 22nd annual Miracle Walk to benefit our NICU will return live and in-person to Verona Park after 2 years of virtual walks due to COVID. The excitement is real! The planning committee and the NICU staff can't wait to see you there! Register ahead of time at www.miraclegwalk.com.

Here's what parents who have attended the previous walks in the park are saying about getting back there:

"I cannot wait to witness a park full of miracles again!"
– Mom of NICU baby, now 12 years old

"I like walking with my whole family. I also like seeing other kids that were in the NICU just like me." – NICU graduate, now 6 years old

"The thing we are looking forward to the most is the PEOPLE! We're so excited to see our NICU roommates! We've walked together every Miracle Walk since our babies graduated, even virtually. It's so nice to reconnect and catch up, and it's especially sweet to watch the kids play together. Taking a group photo together each year has been really special to look back on year after year. We're also super excited to see the incredible super hero CBMC NICU Nurses! It feels like a family reunion. We also love seeing the amazing CBMC NICU Doctors that we are so grateful for. I love introducing my NICU graduates to them to see how far they've come and how well they're doing."

"This year I am especially looking forward seeing all the CBMC NICU FAC families! In person!"

"My favorite thing about the Miracle Walk is looking around the crowd and seeing all the NICU MIRACLES (clearly marked on the back of their shirts!). It's just awe inspiring. It reminds me what a significant impact the CBMC NICU has on so many people's lives. Amazing! Can't wait for this year's Miracle Walk! – three-time NICU graduate parents"

"Can't wait to get out and see all the people. It's so much more real!"
– Mom of NICU graduate, now 5 year old

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**Cooperman Barnabas
Medical Center**

**RWJBarnabas
HEALTH**

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rwjbh.org/coopermanbarnabas [Facebook.com/CBMCNICU](https://www.facebook.com/CBMCNICU)



Interview With Joy Kane, RN NICU Bedside Nurse

Joy has been a big supporter in our NICU of Kangaroo Care (also called skin to skin care). If you see her ask her if you have any questions about it for your baby!

How long have you been working at CBMC?

I've been working as a nurse for over 40 years and have been in the NICU at CBMC for over 30 years.

Why do you think Kangaroo Care is beneficial to the babies and their parents?

It helps with bonding and the overall progress of the NICU babies, especially the very small preemies. Some research even suggests it could lead to earlier discharge in that group of tiny babies.

Do you think the nurses play a large role in whether or not families Kangaroo their babies?

Yes. I believe the nurses' motivation and positive attitude plays a huge role especially during the early days when moms are SO SCARED even to touch their babies. We need to encourage them that it will be ok, and even helpful for baby, so they should try to do it even if they are scared. Being scared is normal.

What does Family Centered Care mean to you?

Family centered care for me means caring for the needs and problems of the NICU babies and including parents and family members and their feelings and concerns.

Do you have any suggestions or advice for NICU families?

It is very important and helpful to keep an open communication with the NICU staff. Talking to the doctors and nurses often can help reduce anxieties and fears because they will let you know how your baby is doing and what you might expect each step of the way. If it is hard for you to come to the unit very often then call on the phone to speak with us as a way of communicating.

Why did you want to become a nurse?

I felt being a nurse and taking care of sick people seemed like a very rewarding experience. Now that I've been a NICU nurse for a long time, I can say I've made a positive difference in the lives of the babies and families I have treated. It feels REALLY GOOD and has led to a fulfillment that is difficult to explain.

Why did you specifically become a NICU nurse?

It's pretty hard to imagine caring for a 300-500 pound adult patient so I thought I'd take on the challenge of caring for the 400-500 gram tiniest babies.

What have you liked the most about working in the NICU?

One of the things I like most about working in the NICU is seeing the very tiniest low birth weight babies grow and get big and strong enough to go home with their families.

What do you think is one of the best things our staff is doing for our families?

One of the best things we are doing is teaching and motivating parents to be involved in their baby's care at the bedside as much as is possible for them. I think encouraging them to do Kangaroo care as early and often as possible is helpful too.

22nd Annual Miracle Walk Sunday, October 9, 2022 *Register now!*

The 22nd Annual Miracle Walk to benefit the Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center NICU will be held on Sunday, October 9, 2022, in beautiful Verona Park. Hope to see you there! To register for this family-friendly walk and get more information, visit: miraclegwalk.com or facebook.com/miraclegwalk.



Emma's Story

During my seemingly healthy pregnancy, I ended up in the hospital on bed rest after my membranes ruptured prematurely at 27 weeks and 4 days. I gave birth to my little girl 5 days later in July of 2019. She weighed just 1 pound, 14 ounces. My daughter's birth is one I will never forget. No one on the outside looking in can describe the feeling of being a NICU parent. You go through many emotions. I strongly suggest buddying up with other NICU parents and talking to supportive NICU staff. I thought it was very helpful to have people who could really relate to the ups and downs of having a premature baby.

In my opinion, the NICU staff is top notch! My family and I always felt like our daughter was being cared for by extended family. We will never be able to repay the staff that took care of Emma. The doctors, the nurses including Ruby, AnnMarie, Michelle, Anita, the security staff, even the cleaning staff were all amazing.

I had to wait 8 long days to hold my little girl. Once I did, even though she had more IVs and cords than I could count, all I saw was my beautiful girl. As our older son put it, "Mom, Emma is tiny but mighty." He knew his sister would make it through. Leaving our baby girl in the NICU everyday was hard but we knew she was in the best of care. Emma needed to grow and learn to feed on her own before she could come home. I sometimes forget that we were both robbed of 12 weeks of her growing inside of my womb.

To help with my depression during this time, I focused on making breastmilk for my baby. When I did this, it felt like I was doing something more than just watching her grow in her incubator (the "Giraffe"). I didn't feel as helpless. I produced enough milk to get through those trying days and believe it helped me mentally, as well as being helpful for her.

Emma is now a healthy, energetic 3 year old. She is thriving and loves to sing songs, dance, color, do puzzles, and blow bubbles outside with her big brother. She has mastered her ABC's, primary colors, and counting from 1-10! Her favorite movie is Encanto and her favorite cartoon is Cocomelon. We thank G-d every day for our miracle baby.

I sit back and think about those first few days in the NICU when it was all a blur, but I vividly remember all of Emma's wonderful nurses and how much they helped my little girl pull through. I also cannot forget the lactation consultant who was so good at her craft. She could help any mom and baby with breastfeeding. The dedication of my wonderful antepartum nurses to their work was also uncanny. Nurse Linda Russo was my lifesaver. She truly loves her patients and I'm extremely grateful to have had her as my nurse.

Emma did amazingly in the NICU and after 57 long days there, our daughter was able to come home with us. It was thrilling, exciting, and nerve wracking, but overall the feeling of having our family all together under one roof was priceless.

Sincerely, **Emma's Mom**



Important Phone Numbers

NICU
973-322-5300

NICU Clinical Director
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. Contact:

Hayley Hirschmann
FAC Coordinator
Hayley.Hirschmann@rwjbh.org
973-322-9486

Dr. Kamtorn Named Physician of The Year by NJBIZ

Congratulations to our own Dr. Kamtorn Vangvanichyakorn, Director of Neonatology, who was named a Physician of the Year by NJBIZ at their Healthcare Heroes Award Ceremony in August. She is the director of our NICU and has dedicated her life to providing the best and most advanced medical care possible for our babies and their families.



If you have seen her moving about the unit, guiding the entire NICU staff and talking to families, then you know why she is held in such high regard. She is beloved by so many NICU families who are grateful for her care and compassion. She has also never missed a Miracle Walk in Verona Park and can't wait to see many of you there in person again on October 9, 2022.

The Miracle Walk Returns in Person! (con't from page 1)

- "Can't wait to see the doctors and nurses!" – Mom of NICU graduate, now 11 years old
- "Our family looks forward to seeing the staff that worked so hard in our tiny baby's life. It's great to have them see how big our baby girl is now and how we will always be forever grateful!" – Mom of NICU graduate, now 4 years old
- "My daughter says seeing her old nurses is the best. I agree. It's great to see everyone that contributed to her growing and thriving." – Mom of NICU graduate, now 8 years old
- "Seeing everyone again! And, the kids can't wait to get their faces painted!" – Mom of NICU graduate, now 7 years old
- "We can't wait for the chance to see and smile with the faces of the people who carried us through some our hardest days!" – Mom of NICU graduate twins, now 14 years old
- "Miracle walk is an amazing opportunity to share a day of joy and gratitude with the miracle worker NICU staff. We can see the pure joy they feel to see the babies grow up We love all coming together as one NICU Family! – Mom of NICU graduate, now 8 years old