

# 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...

the NICU holds a Mother's Milk Club Meeting on Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 10:00 to 11:00 am in the NICU Classroom (down the hall from the NICU Family Lounge). Meetings are led by a lactation consultant who has lots of great information and videos to share about pumping and breastfeeding, but the group is also meant to be interactive and supportive for parents who attend. You may come to this meeting as many times as you like if you have questions or need some different support/help along the way as your babies needs change (i.e. from feeding through a feeding tube to breastfeeding, etc.).

## New Milestone Cards for Saint Barnabas Medical Center NICU Parents

Parents like you who had babies in this NICU over the last few years have been hard at work developing Milestone Cards, pictured left, just for you. Some of them had babies who were here a few days and others a few weeks or even months. They all agreed that many of the books/packs of milestone cards that are out there for preemies, and others NICU babies, don't really meet the needs of the parents here in our NICU, and/or are very expensive. They also agreed that celebrating every precious milestone in the NICU was invaluable and helped them gain a little sense of normalcy while their baby was here.

Many parents take pictures of their baby with the milestone cards and share them with friends and family or with others on social media. Some parents may choose to take pictures of their baby with the cards and keep them as a keepsake or for a scrapbook just for themselves. It's totally up to you what you do with them.

Our NICU graduate parent volunteers created 20 cards (each in two color choices) with milestones that were important to them (i.e., "I had my first hand hug today," "I am one week old today," "I am full term today," "I'm going home today..."). If you are interested in these milestone cards, please feel free to help yourself to whichever ones you would like to have to remember your little one's special accomplishments. Not all of the cards will apply to every baby's situation so just take the ones that do. They are located in the displays in the NICU Family Library.

Don't forget, you can also find complimentary baby hats, scent cloths and diaper shirts for your NICU baby in boxes in the NICU Family Library. All are made for our babies by different generous volunteer groups. If the boxes are empty or you need a different size, just ask your baby's nurse. He or she can try to find what you need or leave word for the NICU Family Advisory Council Coordinator to restock whatever is missing. We hope you enjoy them!

## Interview With Terri Lastella, IBCLC, RLC, Women's Health Education Coordinator

### Q: How long have you been working at Saint Barnabas Medical Center and what is your role?

A: I have been working in the hospital in a number of different roles over 40 years now. Currently, in my role of Women's Health Education Coordinator I am responsible to keep our office filled with any items nursing or pumping moms might need. I also co-lead a weekly new moms support group over at the JCC MetroWest (more info below).

### Q: How did you know you wanted to be in this field and what do you like best about it?

A: Everything!!! I love educating our new families.

### Q: What items do you have for new parents to rent or buy in the Women's Health office?

A: We have many items to buy and some breast pumps to rent. For our NICU moms, I think the hospital grade breast pumps and the hands free pumping bras are really important! We have anything a breastfeeding mom could need like nursing pads, breast milk removal soap, tender care hydrogels, lanolin for sore nipples and Therapearls (hot and cold therapy for the breasts). We also have sleep sack swaddles, nursing pillows, nursing stools, and special need feeders.

### Q: What support groups or opportunities do you have to offer to our new parents?

A: Our New Moms' Circle and Breastfeeding Support group, which is run by Lauren Meisels Ph.D and myself, is a wonderful support for new moms and it's free! Most moms bring their newborn with them to this group so NICU moms don't tend to come until baby has gone home with them, but they are welcome to come at any point they are comfortable with.

Becoming a new mom is a big adjustment with many ups and downs! Some topics that are covered include: myths of motherhood, mood changes, sleep deprivation, marriage and the transition to parenthood and how to balance it all. This group meets every Monday from 10AM to 12:30 PM, right down the road at the JCC Metro West @ 760 Northfield Avenue, West Orange, NJ, 07052. Parents can feel free to call me for more information at 973-322-5360.



Terri Lastella, IBCLC, RLC

### Q: Where is your office located and what hours is it open? Should parents call before they come?

A: The Women's Health Education office is on the 3rd floor of the main hospital right near the elevators in room 3301B. We are open Monday - Friday from 8am - 5pm. If it is during these hours, there is no need to call, but the Lactation Department can also help 7 days a week. All nurses can access a Lactation Consultant for you via the personal paging system in the hospital.

### Q: What does Family Centered Care mean to you?

A: Becoming a family can be wonderfully fun and scary! It is our job to make the transition from Pregnancy to parenthood as smooth as possible. We work together with the Obstetricians, Labor and Delivery, Lactation, Post Partum and our Pediatricians. When the fantasy of child birth and parenthood collide with the reality of being completely responsible for this little person it can be overwhelming! Our job is to help!

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## Dominic's Arrival!

September 4, 2015, started like any other day-my husband, Michael, and I had taken the day off of work to tour a daycare facility in preparation for our first baby, who was due to arrive in January. I was feeling some pressure that morning, but nothing alarming or painful.

On our third stop on a morning of errands, my water broke completely and unexpectedly in the middle of the grocery store. I had never prayed so hard that I was just experiencing bladder weakness! We rushed to my OB's office, where she confirmed that my water did break and prepared me for the possibility of labor in the coming days. We were heartbroken listening to our options-none of which were promising at all.

My mother, Maureen Dunn, RN, has been a NICU nurse at Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) for over 20 years. Even before I was old enough to even consider having children, she insisted that I find an OB that would deliver at her hospital, on the off-



Dominic now and with his parents in the NICU.

chance I needed her NICU. She trusted the doctors and the expert-level care, should I ever need it. It turns out I did.

I was admitted to the antepartum unit, where they found that I was not dilated or in labor. I was hooked up to IV antibiotics for 10 days to battle any potential infections, and my vital signs were checked every four hours around the clock. I also was given steroid injections to mature our baby's lung development. I was expected to begin labor within 24 hours, but surprising everyone, I lasted 9 weeks and began labor at 31 weeks and 3 days.

After two months in the hospital on strict bed rest, Dominic John A. was born via caesarean section on November 8, 2015, at 4 lb., 6.5 oz. He was born with a partially collapsed lung and not breathing, but considering his prematurity, he was a fairly good size. I'd like to think that because I was a "VIP patient," Dominic was under the best care I could ask for, but it is truly the standard of care for ALL babies in the NICU. Dominic spent 25 days in the NICU, where he reached milestones every day-from getting his breathing tube

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## 18th Annual Miracle Walk Benefits the NICU

Plan to come out and join us for the 18th Annual Miracle Walk to benefit the SBMC NICU on **Sunday, October 7, 2018** in Verona Park. Rain or shine, the day is always filled with lots of smiling faces, face painted walkers and lots of NICU staff, families and friends enjoying donated food, music and festivities.

Over the years, the annual event has raised funds for specialized NICU equipment and the new state-of-the-art NICU that we moved into in September 2017. The new NICU is five times the size of the old one and allows for much more comfort for families spending time with their sick and/or premature babies. Check out [miraclegwalk.com](http://miraclegwalk.com) for more information.



**TO LEARN MORE, REGISTER, OR DONATE:**

**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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### Dominic's Delivery! (continued from page 3)

out in 24 hours, to coming off of the nasal cannula in a matter of days, and learning to bottle-feed and grow. The doctors and nurses were so supportive and amazed at his progress, and we truly felt like part of the family. We asked question after question and all of our nurses were patient and kind. My husband and I were able to participate in his care by doing kangaroo care, changing diapers, and feeding him. We successfully navigated the wires and monitors and saw through to the miracle baby he was! When I was discharged, leaving the hospital without our baby was bittersweet. I had not been home in so long, but knowing I could call for an update at any time was very comforting. I saved all of the morning emails that came from his nurses, letting us know how well he was doing and saying hello to us!



Dominic in the NICU.

We could never thank the NICU staff at SBMC enough. Our team, "Dominic's Dominators" walks and raises money yearly at the Miracle Walk to benefit the SBMC NICU, in the hope that future families can experience the support and expertise that we did.

Dominic is now 2 ½ years old-a monster truck lover who won't stop running or talking until it's time to go to sleep! He anxiously awaits the arrival of his little sister in August 2018, who so far has had better luck staying in mommy's belly than he did! - Katie A.

### Interview With Terri Lastella, IBCLC, RLC (continued from page 1)

#### Q: Do you have any suggestions or advice for new NICU parents?

A: The one thing I always hear from new parents is that everyone tells them something different! You will find as new parents that if something doesn't work you might need to try something else. There is no parenting guidebook written that can tell every parent what to do in every situation with their newborn. No two babies are exactly the same. Trust your instincts, this is YOUR baby!

#### Q: Anything else you would like parents to know about what you do?

A: We have a family centered approach - If you need assistance you can call, 973-322-5360. It is important to us that you understand we are here for you when you need us!!! We will help you along your new journey! Congratulations!