

# *nicu* Family News



## Farewell to Dr. Sun

### **Shyan Sun, MD, DCH, FAAP**

Director of Neonatology, Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC)  
Clinical Professor Pediatrics, Rutgers-NJ Medical School

On December 17, 2018, NICU staff and graduate families gathered to say thank you and good-bye to Dr. Shyan Sun (pictured left), the Director of Neonatology, on his retirement. He had been in this role here for the last 25 years and was a true innovator in his field. He was credited with many firsts in the field in the state of NJ and led the unit to provide the best medical care possible for some of the hospitals tiniest and sickest patients.

Dr. Sun was one of the first neonatologists to establish a NICU in New Jersey. In the 1970's, he introduced modern newborn intensive care to NJ and designed the first mobile ICU for newborns in the state. He also organized the state's first helicopter neonatal air transport team.

Over the years Dr. Sun trained almost 50 neonatologists and hundreds of devoted NICU nurses. Among the neonatologists he trained is Dr. Kamtorn who has been his Clinical Director at SBMC for as long as he was here. With his departure, she will be stepping into the role of Director. She has also been recruiting new neonatologists since Drs. Santo Domingo, Tien and Ko also retired at the end of 2018. They too had long careers at SBMC and have been neonatologists here for 40+ years, 20+ years, and 20+ years respectively. We wish them all well in the next chapters of their lives.


The model of physician care in the NICU and focus on implementation of evidence-based practices, that helped Dr. Sun and the NICU team achieve survival rates that exceed the national averages, will continue long after he has left SBMC. His model of physician care required that at least 2 neonatologists be in the hospital to help care for the NICU babies at all times and in most cases each baby is assigned one neonatologist to care for them for all (or most) of their NICU stay. This assures that any specialized NICU care or emergencies that come up can be attended to by a specially trained physician at any hour of the day, any day of the year.

*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...**

You can request to have a NICU Parent Buddy? A NICU Parent Buddy is a parent who has already had a baby (or babies) in the SBMC NICU and can give you emotional and informational support. Because they have had NICU experiences similar to you, they can give very special support that only another parent who "has been there" can. You can request a "Buddy" by filling out a yellow NICU Parent Buddy Program info sheet (found either in the NICU Library or the top drawer in the NICU parent lounge) and give it to any NICU nurse to get to the buddy program coordinator.

**Saint Barnabas Medical Center** | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**

The SBMC NICU is now on Facebook   
[www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU](http://www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU)

94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston, NJ 07039  
1-888-724-7123 [rwjbh.org/sbmc](http://rwjbh.org/sbmc)

## Interview With “Dr. Rani” Rani Thekumparampil MD, FAAP Neonatologist, Saint Barnabas Medical Center

### Q: Where did you do your schooling?

A: At the Medical College Thiruvananthapuram in India, where I also did Pediatric residency.

### Q: Where did you do your residency and training?

A: I did my Pediatric residency at Children’s Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBIMC), Newark, NJ. Thereafter I worked at NBIMC as the Chief Resident in Pediatrics for a year. I did my fellowship in Neonatal and Perinatal Medicine at the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore, Bronx, NY.

### Q: How long have you been working in the NICU here and/or anywhere else?

A: I worked as a neonatologist in Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx for a year before coming here to work about a year and a half ago.

### Q: How did you know you wanted to be a NICU doctor?

A: Ever since I was little I just knew I wanted to do something that involved taking care of people. That eventually grew into deciding I wanted to go into medicine. It was during my residency at NBIMC that I figured out I wanted to take care of babies. I liked the challenge of intensive care and wanted to try to make a difference in the life of the little ones and their families.

### Q: What have you liked the most about working in the SBMC NICU so far?

A: I appreciate how good the team is at what they do and how we all work together. Yes, there are very good doctors to work alongside here, but there are also very skilled nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists and more on the team. They are all dedicated to the best outcomes of the infants we care for. I have also really liked the continuity of care I am able to provide to babies and families here. The model of care in this NICU is unique in that each baby has an assigned neonatologists till discharge. This allows the neonatologist a great deal of ownership of the plan of care and the ability to really get to know the baby and the family, especially if it is a baby that needs to be here for a while.



Rani Thekumparampil,  
MD, FAAP

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

A: To me Family Centered Care means the parents and staff are all working together and listening to each other and each others’ ideas about how to best care for the baby.

### Q: What suggestions or advice do you have for NICU families?

A: I would say, “ask questions, get to know how your baby is doing each day and if you have a baby that needs to stay in the NICU for a few weeks or longer, please try to trust that the staff is doing everything for your baby when you cannot be here.”

>> continues on page 4

## Taylor's Story

After meeting my husband, Scott, in college, we married in 2006, moved to London in January 2006, and enjoyed travelling around the world. We always knew we wanted to have kids and thought we would enjoy travelling the world while we were living in Europe. We never imagined that it would be so hard to get pregnant so when our 3 IUI's and first IVF were either miscarriages or misses, we were starting to lose hope. October 2015 we did our second transfer and were beyond blessed that it worked!

Fast forward to April Fool's Day 2016. It was a regular Friday night in our house; we both got home from work and decided to go out to dinner. We had a nice dinner, came home, relaxed on the couch, watched some TV then headed to bed. I started feeling my stomach hurt around midnight and thought that I ate something bad. I woke up around 5:30 am and knew that we needed to make our way to the hospital as I was having pain every three minutes. Scott jumped out of bed and we were on our way.

Upon arriving at the P.E.T unit, I was 2 cm dilated and within an hour was 6 cm dilated. Nothing was stopping this little girl from arriving at just 25 weeks and 4 days gestation! I was wheeled into Labor and Delivery and at 10:53 am on April 2, Taylor Reiss, born at 1 lb., 13 oz., came out

>>continues on page 4



Taylor now with her family and in the NICU.



## Miracle Walk Update

The 18th Annual Miracle Walk to benefit the Saint Barnabas Medical Center NICU was held on October 7, 2018, in Verona Park. The walk was a great success with over \$280,000 raised by more than 2,000 participants. The walk also serves as a NICU reunion and lots of Dunkin' Donuts (donated from the store on Pleasant Valley Way in West Orange, NJ) and other snacks were donated. A DJ, face painters, costumed characters and balloon artists helped round out the family fun.

**PLAN TO JOIN US FOR ANOTHER GREAT WALK IN THE PARK ON OCTOBER 13, 2019!**

**LEARN MORE:**

**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:

Eileen Steffen, RNC  
NICU Quality & Research  
Coordinator  
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973-322-9485

Hayley Hirschmann  
FAC Coordinator  
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## Taylor's Story (continued from page 3)

crying. She was whisked away by the NICU doctors and nurses that were in the delivery room with us. We spent four nights in the hospital before I was discharged home. It was the hardest day of my life leaving the hospital without bringing our little girl home with us, even though I knew she was in the best place possible.

During 138 days of traveling back and forth to the hospital with the roller coaster ride of events, we met amazing new friends whom are family now, learned a whole new alphabet and acronyms of NICU lingo and learned more about the human body than we ever knew. Just a few weeks after she was born, Taylor battled through necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) for which she underwent 2 surgeries. She also had a third surgery for a Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA).

Taylor is now a feisty, talkative, inquisitive, two-and-a-half-year-old toddler who is such a joy and blessing in our life. We can't thank the SBMC NICU doctors and nurses enough for all that they did for Taylor and we are so lucky to have so many of them in our lives. Scott and I both volunteer back in the NICU and recently I have undertaken a year-round project to collect items to make bags for new NICU families. If you are interested in donating items (i.e. unused board books, tissue packs, chapsticks, etc.) to the bags, visit my Amazon wish list at [amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/8W2B8943580W](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/8W2B8943580W) or contact [hayley.hirschmann@RWJBH.org](mailto:hayley.hirschmann@RWJBH.org) for more information.

With love and admiration to all of the SBMC NICU staff, **Libby T.**

## Interview With Dr. Rani (continued from page 2)

### Q: Anything else you would like to say about your job or working with the team in the NICU?

A: Just that I feel lucky to work with a great team but I also feel lucky to work in this new great facility and have all the technology we need at our fingertips. It's also amazing to see the parents that come back to bring baked goods or visit or volunteer to be on our FAC. It shows how they value the care we provide.

### Q: Do you have any hobbies you would be willing to share about?

A: Between my work and my family (complete with two young children) I don't have much free time, but when I do, I like to read fiction.