

American Preemie Foundation



A quarterly newsletter for families of preemies

Preemie News

January 2009 Volume 1, Issue 1



Did you know...

A baby's chance for survival increases 3-4% per day between 23 and 24 weeks of gestation and about 2-3% per day between 24 and 26 weeks of gestation. After 26 weeks the rate of survival increases at a much slower rate because survival is high already.

Source: www.meriter.com

Welcome to American Preemie Foundation

The American Preemie Foundation was founded in 2008 to help families currently caring for preemies in the hospital.

It's hard enough to have a child in the hospital, but it's especially difficult when that child has been there from the moment it was born and could spend several months under the care of the hospital staff.

The American Preemie Foundation was formed to

help families that are overwhelmed with the expenses that are associated with having a baby in the hospital for so long. If a family is lucky enough to have health insurance, the medical bills are generally taken care of, but what about the grocery bills, lodging expenses, and gas to and from the hospital?

That's where the American Preemie Foundation comes in. We're here to help where we can and provide a

stress free environment for preemies and their families.

When a preemie is in the hospital, the last thing a family needs to worry about is how they are going to pay the bills. Parents need to focus all of their attention on their baby.

Through generous donations from you, we can all come together to help these families and their preemies.

Preemie Health - Reflux

Each newsletter will highlight a medical condition common to preemies. This quarter, we highlight acid reflux in preemies.

Acid reflux is fairly common for preemies because their lower esophageal muscles have not fully developed and it could also be complicated by breathing problems. Even though this condition is common, it should be taken seriously and treated promptly.

If left untreated, your child may refuse to eat since it is painful for him or her. Your child might also spit up frequently, have frequent respiratory problems, and turn pale or gray after eating.

Tests to determine if your baby has reflux are similar to adult tests. Doctors may have your baby swallow barium and take x-rays to see any abnormalities. Doctors might also insert a camera into the esophagus

to view any abnormalities directly.

Like adults, treatment for acid reflux includes remaining in an upright position after eating and medication such as Zantac. It's also recommended to burp your baby frequently.

Most preemies overcome acid reflux by age one because their muscles have strengthened, the esophagus has lengthened, and they spend more time upright.

Spotlight on Preemies

We asked you to submit stories of your tiny miracles and we received an overwhelming amount of responses! Thanks so much for your support.

Since we received so many stories, we will be sharing them throughout the year. So if you don't see your story here, it will be included in a future newsletter.

We are including your

stories in their entirety since we didn't think it would be fair for us to edit your experiences to save space. But we have edited for spelling (as best as we could).

The American Premie Foundation is convinced that sharing stories is crucial to building support for the preemie community as a whole. It is a way for you to read about others and realize that you are not

alone.

Please feel free to share with us more stories that you have and updates on your preemies. You can submit them to contact@preemiefoundation.org

Thanks again for your support and your wonderful stories. We hope you enjoy them!

Trenton Elijah



Trenton Elijah Born July 10,2008 at 35weeks weighing 4lbs 11oz

Here's my story

On June 15th at 32 weeks I had some light spotting and called the Dr and was told to go to L&D so I did and when got there they hooked me up to the monitors and the u/s guy came in and was doing an u/s and I told him "I think I'm having contractions" he said he was almost finished.. So when he got done I went to go potty and came back and told the nurses I was having some pretty intense contractions she thought it was just because I had been laying for awhile. Well she hooked me back up to the monitors and left the room and after about 3 very intense contractions that were going to 105 on the monitors and 10 min later about 3 nurses came rushing in my room and gave a shot of Tributalin and a IV of fluids and the contractions stopped for about an hour and then they were right back and the nurses rushed back in there and gave me another sout treb. And my dr came in and told me that they were going to put me in a regular room because we were having a sleep over LOL.

After they got me in the room I sent my hubby home because I have a then he was a 2 year old. My sister came and stayed with me all night. Anyway they came and gave me a steroid shot which hurt like crap LOL and my contractions didn't start back and the baby stayed stable threw it all he responded very well to all the meds. I then got a bad headache and backache and they offered some high powered pain meds but I declined them and just took Tylenol LOL.

Well the next morning my Dr came in and said I could go home but I had to be back at 10 pm for another steroid shot and that he wanted me on modified bed rest. I had an appointment with my Peri anyway 2days later I guess I should started this by saying my triple screen test came back positive for spina bifida and they sent me to a Perintologist and it was a false positive but they found out that I had a 2 vessel umbilical cord instead of 3 and that could pose a

problem later on so I was going to stay in his care also and have u/s very randomly just to check the baby's growth which was great. So back to my story LOL. I went home with a prescription of Treb. Just in case my contractions started back up. So I went to my Peri and My Fluid was VERY low and they told me to go home on STRICT bed rest and drink fluids and come back in 2 days for another check and if they were still that low they were going to admit me until I delivered that wasn't good cause I have a son at home. So I did as I was told and went back on a Thursday and I begged them to let me wait till Monday to be admitted because my baby shower was Saturday and I didn't want to miss it. So my levels were still low but they let me wait till Monday and I went back Monday and my levels had gotten a little better so they told me I had to go to my dr every 2 days for NST tests and then had to them every other day for NST tests.

Well When I was 33 1/2 weeks they did another u/s and it showed that the baby was now measuring a week behind and they decided that he would have a better chance on the outside so they set to induce me at 37 weeks well on July 9th at 35 weeks I felt like crap all day kind of like I had a stomach bug but at 3:00 I started feeling better and was sitting in the floor playing with my son and I went to get up and I felt this HUGE gush and I thought I'd peed myself then I realized my water had broke so I went and made sure it was clear fluid and I changed clothes and yelled at my husband who was doing some yard work and we headed to L&D where I was already dilated to 3cm and they got me in room and said this is it.

So I called my mom and the rest of the family and they came and my In laws had my son. This was at 7:00pm so they came in at 8:30 and gave me my epidural and everything went great and I told them at 11:30pm that I was fully dilated cause my back was killing me but they refused to believe me so at 12:30am they finally checked me and I was fully dilated and started pushing at 12:42am and Trenton was born at 12:52am weighing 4lbs. 11oz and was 17 1/4 inches he was Perfect. The next morning he couldn't keep his body temp. up and was not eating well at all and what he did eat was coming back up so they did a upper GI and it was just reflux but he had to have a feeding tube and was in a Isolette for 10 days and he dropped to 4lbs 4oz but he was able to come home after just 10days he is now a Healthy Happy 16lb 5 1/2 month old.

Talan Rayce Smith



July 23 basically overnight I was dilated, broken through my cerclage on Wednesday morning. By 8 am I was been wheeled over to L&D and 8 cm dilated. I was given an epidural, then I got to completely dilated within 4 hours. Then wheeled me into l&d delivery room where my dr broke my water. I pushed once and my dr told me stop. Talan's cord was coming out first. So have a protruded cord meant no blood or oxygen to the baby. Within minutes they had an ultrasound looking for his heartbeat. I was so scared. They found it, wheeled me next door and were preparing me for emergency c section. I felt a huge rush in my ivy, a tent went up in front of me and I was breathing gas mask. From the minute I went out it, the dr actually had cut and had Talan out in seconds. I woke up, they already had him cleaned up in a incubator, wrapped up and were wheeling him to Children's hosp of Orange County (which is right next door) You can use a underground passage to get there.

I was in recovery for about an hour. Tim (my hubby) was with Talan. I was then sent over to my recovery room and given LOTS of pain killers (Yipeeee).

Talan Rayce Smith
7.23.08
1 lb 12 oz.

Tim said he yawed when he came out and did not have to be resuscitated, which is really good! He spent 94 days in the NICU, intubated for 4 days, 2 days post delivery, 2 days post PDA surgery. Several transfusions, cpap & nasal canula. PDA surgery. Laryngomalacia and 1 vocal cord paralysis

Bettie Paige – the most recent preemie



The fabulous Bettie Paige makes her debut!

Last Tuesday (12/16/08) I got to spend an exciting 24 hours in the hospital with contractions. I was dilating, so my doc was concerned. They shot me up with terbutaline and gave me Procardia to try to stop the contractions, and it seemed to work. Wednesday morning, I saw a perinatologist, and he told me that he thought I was going to have the baby that day. ...I told him: nuh uh. He wanted me to stay in the hospital for another 24-48 hours. That wasn't going to happen. I left the hospital AMA. My regular OB called me and told me that as long as I adhered to strict bed rest, he was fine with me not spending more time in the hospital. It's easy for me to be on strict bed rest because my hubby is a saint and is willing to wait on me hand and foot--and he did.

Saturday (12/20/08) evening, I was having some contractions. I ended up having contractions most of the night and early morning on Sunday. They got much more intense and much more painful by 11am. The contractions were coming around 6 minutes apart. I held off on calling the doc until around 2 when they were coming 4 minutes apart and lasting over a minute and a half.

My doc told me to go to L&D, so I took a quick shower (though I figured we were having another false alarm). I didn't grab a hospital bag--just my laptop bag with my essentials, like technology, chapstick and hand lotion.

I got to the hospital and they strapped the monitors on. The monitor in triage was apparently hosed because it wasn't registering any contractions. The nurse was able to clearly feel them (and believe me, so was I). She also had problems finding itty bitty Bettie's heartbeat, which is pretty normal for my little drama queen.

She checked my cervix and I was dilated to 3cm and still 100% effaced (I had been 100% effaced for 2 weeks), of course. She giggled when she checked my cervix because she said that Bettie was kicking the crap out of her finger and that she didn't think it would be long before my water broke. She went to check on the status of my doctor.

When she came back, she said that Dr. Holton told her that I was going to have a c-section. I was a little shocked, and Adam was skeptical. We both still figured I'd get sent home. Because we were both skeptical, we held off on calling anyone.

By the time Dr. Holton arrived (about 30 minute later) I was dilated to 5cm. He said it was pointless to try to stop labor and assured me my little girl's odds at 33 weeks and were fantastic. He did a quick ultrasound to verify that she was still breech, and she was, so he started getting the ball rolling.

I signed consent forms, and the L&D nurse got my IV hooked up. She started freaking out about the jewelry in my bellybutton, so she, Dr. Holton and another nurse took a turn trying to get the sucker out. Well...when you've had jewelry in your bellybutton for 16 years, it tends to get frozen. I signed paperwork saying we were going to leave it in.

I got wheeled up to the OR, and they dropped Adam off to put on scrubs. When I got in the OR, there were about 6 nurses there to take care of me and Bettie. The first thing they did was have me sit on the edge of the bed so they

could do the spinal block. It wasn't bad. The worst part is the fact that my back is one of the most ticklish places on my body. The anesthesiologist asked me if I had any skin without ink on it anywhere on my spine, and I said no. He laughed and said I was the most colorful mom he'd ever worked on. :)

They had me sit with my head to my chest so my back would round out. One of the nurses hugged me (which was very comforting and sweet, even though I know she was just holding me steady...the support was wonderful) and I felt a ticklish prick on my back. That was the numbing agent. I then felt a weird sensation as the spinal block was administered. The whole process took less than 30 seconds. Within a minute, my legs were nice and warm and tingly. A minute later I was dead from the chest down. My doc tested by pinching my abdomen really hard and I didn't feel a thing. The nice thing was, as soon as the spinal took hold, I didn't feel any more contractions!

The weirdest part was having the sheet in front of me. I could feel them moving my legs around and could feel pressure from where they were rubbing me down with sterilizing stuff. They also put in a catheter, and after having to pee every 5 seconds for the last month or so, it was WONDERFUL! :)

I was laughing and joking with my doc and the nurses when they let Adam back in. My doc went to work. I felt a little tugging and some pressure, but nothing like pain. I talked and joked with everyone in the room the entire time. It felt weird, but I didn't feel a lick of pain. My doc was even talking me through what he was doing, so I'd know what was going on.

The next thing I knew, Dr. Holton said that he was pulling Bettie out by her butt and that she did indeed have TONS of hair. She was born on 12/21/08 at 5:39pm, and weighed in at 4 pounds 1 ounce. She measured 17.1 inches in length. She didn't make any noise, but she was breathing on her own and was awake and alert. They showed her to me briefly before she and Adam were taken to the next room to get cleaned up. Adam was bawling like a little girl. I was still in shock at having just had a baby, so I didn't cry one tear! I feel a little weird about that. I did hear her when she started to cry in the room next door, and that made me a little misty. :)

Right after she was out, Dr. Holton checked my uterus for the septum, and sure enough it was there. He even mentioned it to a nurse and let her feel it. At that point I told them that if they were going to poke around in my guts to at least keep their voices down because the thought was grossing me out.

About this point, proud daddy came back with my darling little girl. They had her bundled up with her hat on and she was gorgeous. I didn't get to look at her long, but her color was awesome and she looked right at home in her daddy's arms. Adam started crying again...which is always adorable, and then he went with the nurse to get Bettie into a bed in NICU.

By the time my doc sewed me up, my uterus was already down to the size of a softball. The team was marveling at my flat tummy (I think they were just being nice) and one of the nurses even took my hand and showed me that I had ribs again. Haha! My doc said I'd likely be walking out of the hospital in my pre-pregnancy jeans. I told him that would only happen if he vacuumed some of the mass outta the ass and thighs that grew in during this pregnancy. It was still nice to hear, even if they were just humoring me.

I was then taken to recovery and stayed there for about an hour and a half. In recovery they hooked me up to a pitocin drip to encourage my uterus to continue to contract down to its normal size and help expel blood. At that point I was still pretty numb and couldn't move my toes. As my legs slowly woke up, they were itchy.

Adam finally came back right as they were getting ready to move me to a post partum room. He said that he'd been looking for me, but I know in reality he just wanted to spend time with his baby. He did show me pictures, and she's amazing.

I was wheeled up to my post partum room and moved into a bed. At that point I could lift my hips on my own, so I was able to help the nurses get me moved in. The nurses in my PP room were AWESOME all night. I love them! I got to visit with my mom and my sister. The only pain I had was from laughing. It gives new meaning to busting a gut. ;) Even that pain wasn't severe. They did give me some Motrin and some narcotics to help stave off the pain. Mmmm...narcotics.

They took the catheter out the next morning, so now I had to get up to pee...it's a bummer. It was nice being lazy. I was up and walking around all day on Monday, and while things were tender, I wasn't in pain. This week I've spent tons of time with little Miss Bettie. She had a feeding tube and IVs in until Wednesday (3 days after she was born) then she ripped them out. She was doing well enough that they didn't have to replace them. She's been breathing on her own since delivery. Thank goodness for the steroid shots I was given on December 5 and 6! They seem to have done their job!

I've been feeding her at least 4 times a day. We're having to supplement my breast milk with formula because I'm not producing enough to give her exclusively for each of her 8 feedings. She was put under the UV light for a bilirubin level of 12.1 on Thursday (4 days after she was born), but since then her bilirubin levels have been 6.1 or lower. Her weight dropped to 3 pounds 10 ounces, then started to rebound. As of yesterday (6 days after she was born) she was up to 3 pounds 13 ounces. She's eating at least 40mL by bottle every 3 hours.

I can't wait to bring her home. Even though we're at the hospital a lot, I hate leaving her. I'm so fortunate that the nurses caring for her are absolutely wonderful.

Today is the one week anniversary of her birth. I still can't believe I'm a mommy. The feeling I get when I look at her beautiful, tiny face is indescribable.

Collin

Hi! My name is Shalana, and my son Collin was born 5 wks early- and on his big brother's 5th birthday!!

I woke up around 1:45 am needing to use the restroom, and when I got out of bed, a gush of liquid surprised me. I thought the baby was just on my bladder, so I used the restroom and went back to bed. This happened two more times before I got out of bed for the morning. Around 7:45 I was taking clothes out of the dryer and more liquid started running down my legs- this is when I started to think something was REALLY weird! When I got to work that morning, I warned my boss that I may need to run to the Dr. quickly and told her what was going on. I then called the Dr. and left a message for a nurse to call me back- still not terribly concerned. The nurse called back and told me that I should go to L&D, to which I replied, "Well, today is my son's 5th birthday, and he is having a party at Chuck E. Cheese, so I wouldn't be able to stay long." Needless to say, when they tested and showed that I was leaking amniotic fluid, they didn't care that I had a party to attend! I was induced to start contractions, and my son Collin was born four hours later at 6:29 pm, on his big brother Zachary's 5th birthday, and Zachary couldn't be more thrilled!

One preemie is difficult enough, imagine having three! The next two families had three preemies each. Wow.

Cullen, Shannon, and Joel



This is the story of the Loubser Family:

Stuart and I got married in 1999, and decided we would wait 5 years before starting a family. 3 years later, at the beginning of my final year of college (I was training to be an RN), I found

out I was pregnant. I had a wonderful pregnancy up until 26 weeks. I was working in an Orthopedic ward at a busy government hospital at the time, when I went into prem labour. After 2 weeks of bedrest and medication to keep the labour at bay, I went into labour again. This time I was admitted and put on IV medication to stop labour. It did not work. On 05 July 2002 my first son, Cullen, was born via c/section at 28w 5d, weighing 1.47kg. I caught a glimpse of what looked like a tiny purple alien, before he was rushed off to the NICU. Later that night I was taken to see my brand new baby. He was all tubes and wires. I knew what to expect because of my experience working in the NICU during my training, but when you see your own baby hooked up to all those machines, it's a completely different story. Cullen was on a ventilator for 3 weeks. I only got to hold him for the first time when he came off it – what an exciting day that was! He was then on oxygen via nasal cannula for another 4 weeks after that. Once he was off the oxygen, I was allowed to give him a breast feed, the next most exciting day! All along the doctors had been monitoring his eyes for retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), because he was on high levels of oxygen for such a long time. The day before we were to be discharged, they decided it had progressed too far and he needed laser surgery to both eyes. What a disappointment! The surgery went well, but the ophthalmologist predicted he'd need to wear glasses when he got to 3 years old. We went for numerous follow-up visits, and Cullen has perfect eyesight today without ever needing glasses! Cullen came home after a total of 8 weeks in hospital, needing no medication, just some vitamins.

About a year later I found out that I was pregnant again. This pregnancy was terrible from the word go. When I found out I was expecting (at about 4weeks) I had Bronchitis. At 8 weeks I contracted a terrible stomach bug and was admitted for about 5 days. At 17 weeks I went into prem labour again. This time it was strict bed rest with a barrage of medications for the rest of the pregnancy. I was admitted to hospital at 21 weeks and 26 weeks to stop the labour again. Eventually, at 32 weeks the labour could no longer be stopped. Our precious daughter, Shannon, was born on 19 February 2004, weighing 1.56kg. This time all I got a glimpse of was her tiny feet, before she was whisked away to the NICU. Shannon did a lot better than Cullen. She was only on a ventilator for 1 day and oxygen via nasal cannula for another day. We were so happy at her progress! Our pediatrician suspected that she had a Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA), a normal complication of prematurity. The hospital where she was born (and where I was working) houses the Walter Sisulu Pediatric Cardiac Center for Africa. Because of this there is a whole team of the best pediatric cardiologists available 24hrs a day. One of the cardiologists was called in to do an Echocardiogram when Shannon was 3 days old. She was not diagnosed with a PDA, but with a huge ventricular septal defect (VSD) and a double chambered right ventricle. This was a huge shock to us! By the providence of God, she was already in the facility where she would need to be treated. If she was born anywhere else, she would have been transferred to this hospital! Shannon would need to be monitored carefully and at the first sign of heart-failure she would need open heart surgery. She was immediately put on a whole host of medications. Shannon really battled to gain weight, as she would get tired easily during feeds. Eventually, after 5 weeks, we were allowed to take her home with her nasogastric (feeding) tube still in. I had to give her medication every hour or two, and feeding was a real problem. She would drink little amounts every hour or so, day and night! It was exhausting to say the least. The cardiologists kept a close eye on her and when she was 3 months old (and weighed only 3kg!) it was decided that surgery was necessary. On 14 May 2004, Shannon had a 5 hour operation to fix her broken heart. The surgery was a huge success and she was a different baby after that (although she never really slept very well). 14 days after her op, all the medication was stopped and she started gaining weight well. At her last cardiology check-up the Doctor said that the only sign that anything had ever been wrong with her heart is the scar on her chest!

After all this, we had decided that 2 children were all we could handle. But, God had other plans for us. On my birthday last year (2007) I took a pregnancy test to prove that the nausea I was feeling wasn't due to being pregnant. To my shock and horror, it came back positive! I must admit, I cried for a long time. I do, however, love babies, so by the end of the day I was starting to feel rather excited. At 6 weeks I started bleeding quite heavily. I was diagnosed with a sub-chorionic hematoma and told that the baby would probably not survive. So, back to bed rest for me! I bled on and off until 16 weeks, when the hematoma eventually reabsorbed. From then on things were great. I had such a wonderful pregnancy and enjoyed every minute

of it. One Saturday afternoon, at 30 weeks, I thought my waters had broken. I went to hospital and was told that I was again in premature labour. On Monday 12 May 2008, our 3rd child, Joel, was born via another emergency c/section. He weighed 1.76kg – my big boy! We went through the whole routine again. Joel developed a bad lung infection and was put on an oscillator for about a week. He then went onto the ventilator for another 2 weeks. When he was about 2 weeks old, his oxygen saturation levels kept dropping. The cardiologists were called in again to check his heart (especially because of our history). His heart was given 10/10! BUT...the cardiologist noticed that his liver was huge! Further test were done and he was diagnosed with a hepatic abscess. The condition was rare and potentially life-threatening. Once again, we were faced with the prospect that we could lose one of our children. It was decided that the abscess needed to be drained and this was done in the NICU. His condition improved dramatically after the drainage, and we were soon able to take him home after 4 weeks in the NICU. After numerous follow-ups, Joel's liver is now back to being completely normal!

Cullen is now 6 years old, Shannon is 4 years old and Joel is 7 months old. They are all perfectly normal, healthy, strong and gorgeous children! It was truly only the grace and love of God that got us through the trials He set for us. Needless to say, my baby-factory has been well and truly shut-down!

Hailey, Andrew, and Molly



It's always a privilege to talk about my family and share our story.

18 months ago we welcomed 3 very special babies into our lives. Our triplets were born at 24 ½ weeks and faced a long road. Hailey, weighing in at 1 lb 8 oz came first, followed by Andrew, who weighed 1 lb 13 oz. The last to be born was Molly, who was a mere 15 oz. Each of their journeys was unique and full of both challenges and victories. There were days when we thought we'd have just two babies to take home, and other days when we thought we could take on the world. In the end, these little miracles amazed both their medical teams and their families and friends surrounding them.

After 3 ½ months, 2 surgeries, and an otherwise typical NICU stay, Hailey came home to be with us. She has done more than anyone could have expected from her and if it weren't for her size, you may not know she is a preemie. Today she is crawling, walking, mastering cognitive skills, and has developed beginning conversation skills. She has met and conquered every challenge put before her.

Andrew spent just over 4 months in the NICU, avoided any surgeries but had his own share of difficulties. He was transferred to Children's hospital at 3 weeks to be evaluated for a bowel obstruction. Shortly after that, he developed a lung condition called Pulmonary Interstitial Emphysema, which basically means air that leaked out between the air sacs and outer lining of the lungs. His prognosis at that point was pretty dire and we spent days praying and hoping he would pull through. Being the trooper that he is, he recovered and spent a total of 7 weeks at Children's. About a week after his return to the UW, he developed another medical condition called NEC. This time he had air leaking into the walls of his intestines, which could likely lead to perforation. Again, he responded well to treatment and it wasn't long before he was home with his family. Today Andrew is crawling, cruising, mastering fine motor skills and perfecting his cognitive and play skills. His road has been more difficult than Hailey's, but he's proven that he's up for the challenge.

Our tiniest miracle, Molly, started giving us trouble at just 21 weeks into the pregnancy. She was not growing and drs. Speculated that she would not survive for much longer. And, because she shared a placenta with her twin sister, Hailey would also suffer from complications and possible death. Well, much to Molly's insistence and amazing will to

overcome challenges, our 15 oz. miracle is here with us today. After 7 ½ months in the NICU, the beginnings of congestive heart failure, three surgeries, a 42 day course of antibiotics, a mild brain hemorrhage, several self extubations, 3 hospital transfers, a collapsed lung, and feeding issues, Molly arrived home and has continued to surpass all expectations ever placed before her. She made quite an impression on her medical team and continues to touch the lives of people around her. Today she is rolling, sitting, beginning to crawl, pulling up to knees, and doing her best to learn how to eat. One day people will be talking about the comeback of this little girl.

Given the start to life these babies had, it's no surprise that they've faced challenges and have had to work harder than most to accomplish all that they have. I attribute much of their success not only to their own perseverance, but to the amazing therapists that we have been blessed with. I have had the privilege of watching these little ones grow, learn, and become stronger babies during their therapy sessions. When people see me out and about, one of the first questions I'm asked is "Do you have help?" Well, some might think no because I don't have a nanny or a housekeeper. What I do have, though, are the people who come to our home to work with our babies 3-4 times a week, so we can keep them as healthy and comfortable as possible. I think having this opportunity has been paramount in their health and their development.

It was no easy task finding an OT, PT, Teacher, and Feeding Therapist who were all willing to provide in home services and I have Candy Watkins from ASAP to thank for that. She worked diligently and extended herself so that we could receive the best care possible. Thank you Candy. Not only that, but she has become a constant figure in our lives, serving as the babies' teacher and as a friend and a helper to my family. A while back she arrived at my house right in the middle of a slight medical crisis. Andrew had injured himself and the medics were there checking him out. Hailey was downstairs but Molly was upstairs crying, waiting to be brought down. Candy stepped right in and helped me get things together while offering me comfort at the same time. This might not be part of her job description, but she was there nonetheless. She has certainly gone beyond the call of duty when it comes to my family.

In theory, our babies should not be doing the things they have accomplished so far. Especially Molly, who came home attached to oxygen, a feeding tube, and a wedge to keep her upright. Their lung disease and medical complications have caused major delays in their growth and development. With Molly's brain hemorrhage and abscess, it was possible she wouldn't walk or have full function of one or more of her limbs. Her vision or speech could be affected as well. Nevertheless, the therapy they receive on a weekly basis has helped them learn the skills needed to become physically and mentally capable, strong enough to be 3 mobile, very active and pleasantly social little people.

At the beginning of this journey, I have to admit, the outcome looked grim. But what we are experiencing today is more than I could have hoped for. I have many answers to the question "How do you do it?", for it's not a simple task. But today, the answer is easy. I do it together, with a group of therapists surrounding my family that has as much faith in my babies' potential and hope for them that I do. And who work just as hard to help them reach their milestones and become all they are capable of.

If it weren't for organizations like ASAP, my babies would not be receiving the therapy they need to accomplish their goals. At \$20 a copay, times 3, times 3 again, that's nearly \$200 a week. The funding received to make ASAP operational is so crucial to not only my babies' outcomes, but others as well. I have friends who benefit from this wonderful program and I think I speak for all of them when I say Thank you for your support and for making it possible for our children to grow and learn. Your contributions make a difference for all of us.

More stories to come in our next newsletter!

Keep reading below for more articles...

A Special Thanks

I would like to give a special thanks to Cathy Miller at www.easysite.com/millerlife. She and her family are preparing to open a store called Sharing Our Talents and has offered to give some of the proceeds to the American Preemie Foundation.

Cathy is mom to a preemie and has dedicated her life to promoting awareness and providing assistance to others with preemies.

It's times like this that I am so grateful to be part of a special group of people

brought together by special babies.

With generous support like this, I know that we have the power to help so many families in need.

Sincerely,
Karen Roberts
President



Please feel free to donate

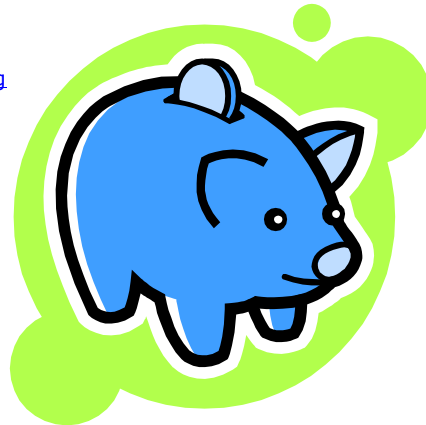
The American Preemie Foundation does not receive any government funding, nor do we receive funding from any other organization. We rely solely on the generosity of donations from you.

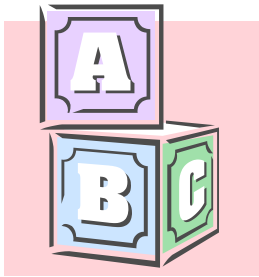
The American Preemie Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, so any donations made to us are fully tax deductible.

Please find it in your hearts to help other families who were in the same situation as you, but may not have the funds available to meet their daily needs.

Please visit www.preemiefoundation.org to make a donation today.

Thank You!





Volunteers Needed

Calling all volunteers.

We need your help. If you'd like to volunteer your time for the American Premie Foundation, please contact us at contact@premiefoundation.org

We need people to submit articles for the newsletter.

If you or someone you know lives in the South Florida area, we need volunteers to help organize events.

And we always need volunteers to help spread the word of this great cause.

Contact Info:

American Premie Foundation
170 Cypress Club Drive
Unit 710
Pompano Beach, FL 33060

Website:
www.premiefoundation.org

Email:
contact@premiefoundation.org

Extras:

If you live in the South Florida area, come join our Yahoo Group. It's called South_Florida_Premies and is a group for local families with premies to chat. See our website for a link to join!

Check out our blog at www.premiefoundation.blogspot.com
It's a journey through the creation of the American Premie Foundation and the behind-the-scenes boring stuff that goes on when forming a charity.

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and does not offer medical advice. Please see a doctor if your child has any medical issues.