

# *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 Patient Park is an outdoor area with benches, a pond and a gazebo? As the weather gets nicer, you may want to take a walk there and get some fresh air. It's located near the rear of the hospital. Ask a NICU staff member or someone at the hospital information desk for directions.**

## Kangaroo Care

Kangaroo Care or skin-to-skin care is a special way for parents to hold their baby in the NICU. If you are able to hold your child for even short periods of time, you may want to consider giving it a try. Kangaroo Care allows parents to hold their baby up against their bare chest while the baby is clothed only in a diaper, offering skin-to-skin contact. The baby is placed in an upright position with his head over the parent's heart. The baby is then covered in a shirt or blanket for warmth.

Lisa, mother to 29-weeker Cole, shared her experience with Kangaroo Care. "I had held Cole, but he was always wrapped up tight in a swaddle. Kangaroo Care was an opportunity for us to have a truly close physical bond. Since I couldn't nurse him yet, this was the next best thing." Likewise, Kim M., mother of 28-week twins, said she felt Kangaroo Care not only allowed her to "feel" her babies as her heart craved but also noticed it comforted them to hear the familiar sounds of her body. In fact the nurses were able to lower her son's oxygen while she held him like this!

There are many benefits to Kangaroo Care, besides the obvious bonding experience. It can help your baby:

- Maintain his body temperature
- Regulate his heart and breathing rates
- Gain weight
- Spend more time in deep sleep
- Spend more time quiet and alert
- Spend less time crying

Kangaroo Care has even been shown to improve breastfeeding, by helping with mother's breast milk production. Please talk to your baby's nurse if you are interested in trying Kangaroo Care.

94 Old Short Hills Road  
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## *Interview with Chuck Ennis, RNC, MHCA*

**Saint Barnabas Medical Center NICU Nurse Manager since 2005**

National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6 (also known as National Nurses Day) through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale who is considered the founder of modern nursing. So, we thought it fitting to profile the SBMC NICU's own Nurse Manager, Chuck Ennis.

**Q: What interested you in this position?**

A: It was the chance to coordinate a NICU of highly-skilled bedside nurses and doctors who produce some of the best NICU outcomes in the world.

**Q: What is your primary role in your position?**

A: To keep the infants and nurses safe, to ensure efficient use of limited resources and to participate on a team in search of better patient outcomes and family experiences.

**Q: What do you like most about working in the NICU?**

A: When I was a bedside nurse, my favorite part was encouraging the parents to help in the care of their infant. Each parent is different but many, especially the fathers, are afraid to touch the infant. Now, as a manager, special moments are when a parent or nurse tells me that a decision I was part of had a positive impact.

**Q: What do you think of when you think of Family Centered Care, or what does it mean to you?**

A: When a newborn comes to the NICU, most parents feel powerless. Before Family Centered Care, NICU doctors and nurses made all the decisions for the babies in their care. Now, we do our best to encourage parents to ask questions, hold and feed their babies and provide Kangaroo Care. We encourage them to spend as much time as possible with their babies. We have come to realize that babies and their families are better off when the parents are our partners and part of the NICU team.

**Q: What are you most proud of?**

A: The NICU nurses and doctors. We have made many changes in the past three years. We have a better NICU when we work as a team with the bedside nurses, doctors, social workers and parents.

**Q: Can you share some of the changes in the SBMC NICU that have occurred since you've been there?**

A: Our electronic charting system, Crib Notes, has probably been the biggest change. Crib Notes sends a daily e-mail to parents about the progress of their infant based on the information the nurses and doctors enter about the baby. A discharge summary which



Chuck Ennis, RNC, MHCA

gives the pediatrician important information about the baby's NICU stay is also created when each baby leaves the NICU.

Communication between everyone in the NICU team continues to improve through frequent and effective meetings, daily huddles and e-mail.

Finally, our NICU infection rates have been significantly reduced through continuous education to staff and parents. Following the hand washing process is one of the best ways to keep infections at a minimum.

**Q: Any suggestions for parents?**

A: Ask lots of questions. If something is unclear or does not seem right speak up. Trust your parental instincts. Never leave the NICU feeling unsatisfied.

If you have any questions, even if you just want stop by and say hi, my door is always open. My phone number is 973-322-5345.



## Josiah's Story

Our son Josiah was born on May 7, 2006, at 26 weeks gestation, weighing only 1 pound, 3 ounces. It was a very scary time for us. Josiah was so tiny that he could fit in the palm of one of our hands. You would

think a baby that small would not have a chance of surviving.

During the first half of our son's three month stay in the NICU, we could not imagine ever wanting to leave his bedside because his condition was always changing. The doctors, nurses and support staff of the NICU helped us feel reassured and confident that Josiah was in the best hands. Throughout Josiah's NICU stay we developed a special relationship with the doctors, nurses and staff, so much so that we all became one big family. Whenever Josiah took a step back, they were always there with encouraging words and a hug to let us know everything was going to be okay.

Today, at two and a half years old, Josiah is a healthy, loving, energetic little boy who loves to sing, play basketball and football, and wrestle with his big brother Tyree. He is such an inspiration to our family and friends and reminds us each and every day that miracles really do happen.

- **Tawonna and Mahadi R.**

## MIRACLE WALK UPDATE

In the past, money raised through Miracle Walk has been used to buy special state-of-the-art equipment for the NICU including Giraffe™ Omnibeds™, NeoPuff infant resuscitators, new isolettes and isolette transporters. This year, the NICU plans to invest money from the 2008 Miracle Walk in what Shyan Sun, M.D., Director of Neonatology, considers the most advanced technology available for the ventilatory care of newborns. Neurally Adjusted Ventilatory Assist or NAVA attaches to the ventilators (or breathing machines) currently being used in the NICU. With NAVA, the baby "sends messages" to the ventilator and tells it to deliver exactly what he or she needs. This will reduce the risk of over- or under-inflation of the baby's lungs.

The NICU staff is very excited about this new technology. They recently tested this high tech mode of ventilation and

## DID YOU KNOW...

...the meal/snack/beverage options listed below are available at SBMC?

- You can contact the **concierge**, Jackie Miele at 973-322-5500, to arrange to have any desired meals delivered to you in the NICU Lounge after you are discharged from the hospital.
- The **hospital cafeteria** is located on the ground floor near the main lobby. It is open Monday through Saturday (closed Sundays) for breakfast from 7 to 10 a.m., lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Additionally, the deli and salad bar are open from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Vending machines are located inside the dining room and available 24/7.
- **Cup of Joe's Café**, located on the ground floor of the main lobby and open daily from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., serves coffee, tea and light snacks.
- **McDonald's** is located down the long hallway past the cafeteria and is open 24/7.



were very happy with the baby's response. They believe NAVA will reduce ventilator-related health problems, the number of days on a ventilator, the length of stay and thus the cost of care.

**The 9th Annual Miracle Walk will take place on Sunday, October 4, 2009, in Verona Park.**

**To learn more or to sign up for the walk:**

**Visit: [www.miraclegwalk.com](http://www.miraclegwalk.com)**

**Email: [miraclegwalk@sbhcs.com](mailto:miraclegwalk@sbhcs.com)**

**Phone: 973-322-4259**

## Important Phone Numbers:

NICU

973-322-5300

NICU Step-down (3100)

973-322-5310

NICU Social Workers

973-322-5503 or 8408

Birth Certificate Office

973-322-5327

## 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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# nicu

## DID YOU KNOW...

**...lots of good hand washing is the best way to keep your baby from getting sick? Do it and insist others who come in contact with your baby do it too.**

## Sibling Visitation in the NICU

On April 30, 2008, my five-year-old son Christopher became the proud big brother of Gianna Nicole. Gianna was born at 34 weeks and was admitted directly to the NICU following her birth. Her early arrival was unexpected and very difficult to explain to Christopher who had been prepared for what we all hoped and planned for -- a full term birth.



Because of the sibling visitation policy recently created with the help of the FAC, Christopher was able to visit with his new baby sister in the NICU. Christopher met the age requirement (ages five and up) and his immunizations were up to date. Before arranging a visit, I explained to him what he would see when he entered the NICU. I especially talked about the purpose of hand washing and using the special sinks and what his sister would look like since she was in an isolette and connected to machines with lots of wires and tubes.

When we arrived at the NICU, a nurse gave Christopher a health screening to make sure he didn't have a cold or other illnesses that would prevent him from visiting with Gianna. These screenings are conducted every time a sibling visits the NICU. On our way down the hall I could see Christopher looked a little nervous but was trying to be tough. Once inside the NICU, the overwhelmed and scared look was obvious and very normal for anyone first stepping foot into a NICU, especially a child. We washed our hands at the sinks and took him to meet his sister. We were greeted by Gianna's nurse who had her all ready for her visit. She even tied a beautiful piece of pink ribbon around her hair. She looked so precious. The nurse was very helpful and talked with Christopher. She encouraged him to touch her and give her a gentle kiss.

He was so excited to be able to see her and know that she really was not in mommy's belly anymore. Christopher's excitement did not end there. He spent the next few days proudly telling everyone about his special visit to the NICU and his baby sister. It was truly an experience our whole family will remember.

**- Kim N.**

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