



The Reading Hospital and Medical Center's words of wellness

PREVENTION | EDUCATION | SUPPORT

July - September 2010



“I felt confident knowing that the services of The Reading Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit were right there in case we needed them.”

- Lorah Ray

Just four months pregnant with her first child, Lorah Ray was uneasy about leaving her husband in South Africa to return to her parents' home in Morgantown. As a volunteer aboard the world's largest charity hospital ship, Lorah was required to wait out her pregnancy and give birth to her baby on land while Justin remained on board the Mercy Ship.

The couple chose The Reading Hospital as their baby's birthplace.

Lorah Ray with husband Justin and daughter Lily



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Turn the page to learn how Lily, born weighing only two pounds, benefited from the expert care provided by the NICU team.

The Region's Only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Provides Specialized Care to the Tiniest Patients

Lorah's pregnancy was healthy until she experienced contractions 13 weeks before her expected delivery date. She was admitted to The Reading Hospital Beginnings Maternity Center, where clinical experts successfully halted her preterm labor.

Lorah received a corticosteroid injection to help her baby's lungs mature. Before being discharged to her parents' home, Lorah met with David F. Sorrentino, MD, Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and board-certified neonatologist. He specializes in the care of premature infants and newborns with special needs and assured Lorah that The Reading Hospital's NICU team was fully prepared if her baby arrived early.

"I felt at ease," recalled Lorah. "No mother wants to deliver early or have her baby need to stay in a NICU. But I felt confident knowing those services were right there in case we needed them."

While Lorah was content to wait several more weeks to give birth, her baby wasn't. Baby Lily entered the world early the next day.

Since the first few minutes are the most critical in the care of premature infants to prevent long-term illnesses and disabilities, the well-trained team of physicians and nurses set the pace to provide the expert care. Lead by Dr. Sorrentino, Lily was examined immediately and moved to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where she received around-the-clock specialty care. Thanks to the injection Lorah had received the day before, Lily only needed a ventilator for breathing assistance for one day.

For the five days Lorah remained hospitalized, she and Justin bonded with Lily through frequent visits to the NICU. "Because the Beginnings Maternity Center has all private rooms, Justin was able to stay with me, so we could spend even more time with our baby."

While Lily spent nine weeks in the Hospital to allow her digestive system to fully develop, Mom and Dad had full access to baby Lily and the entire team of nurses and physicians kept them well informed on her progress.

Today, Lily is a healthy, thriving 5-month-old who will spend the summer developing her sea legs. She will join her parents this fall on board the Mercy Ship as they resume their volunteer work providing medical services to the world's poor.

Like most expectant parents of twins, Steve and Stephanie Kohler knew there was a chance that their babies would arrive early. When Stephanie's water broke, the babies were only at 30-weeks gestation, and due to arrive nine weeks ahead of schedule. Although concerned, the couple remained optimistic. They were confident that their babies would receive excellent intensive care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) if they needed it.

Even before the twins made their appearance, the NICU team sprang into action. Stephanie received injections to help the babies' lungs mature while being closely monitored. Upon delivery, the newborns were transferred immediately to the NICU where specialists administered respiratory support for the first few days.

"Thanks to the team's immediate interventions, Abram and Emily flourished. They remained in the NICU after Stephanie's discharge to feed and grow," said Steve. Abram went home for the first time after three weeks, and Emily joined her brother three weeks later.

As the family prepares to celebrate the twins' first birthday, Steve describes Abram and Emily as "beautiful and beaming with life."

He adds, "We extend our thanks to every caregiver we encountered at the Hospital."



Steve and Stephanie Kohler with their twins Abram and Emily



The Reading Hospital NICU team: Joie Fisher, DO, (starting summer, 2010); Jessica Kalia, DO, (starting summer, 2010); Miriam Yu, MD; Felicia Lombardo, NNP-BC; David Sorrentino, MD; and Gerard Brown, DO. (not pictured: Tina Moyer-Fuchs, MSN, NNP-BC)

The Reading Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is the only Level III NICU in the region, which means we meet the requirements to provide the highest level of critical care services to premature infants, at-risk newborns, and babies born with serious health complications. And, we consistently rank above the national averages in preventing lung disease, blindness, and neurological disorders.

Our 22-bed Unit is equipped with the most advanced technology and is staffed by fellowship-trained, board certified neonatologists, certified neonatal nurse practitioners, highly skilled nurses, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, and lactation professionals.

The team is led by Dr. Sorrentino, board-certified in neonatal-perinatal medicine and an expert in neuro-development. A fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Sorrentino comes to Berks County through The Reading Hospital's partnership with world-renowned St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. As a result of the partnership advanced pediatric specialty care to diagnosis and treat complex pediatric illnesses, medical conditions, and diseases is now available in Berks County.