

PREEMIES TODAY

Families Helping Families

Premie of the Month: Daniel

A Three-Year-Old with a Big Smile and a Big Personality

by Lynn Lascola

July 27th, 2004 was the scariest day of my life--it was the day I became a mother. I was 32 weeks pregnant and until just days before giving birth, I believed I had almost two more months of pregnancy before I'd get to meet my son.

At first, my pregnancy seemed like a wonderful gift from God with a Christmas conception. I became pregnant the same month my husband Kevin and I agreed to try to start a family. My first trimester was pretty typical. Things got a bit more interesting during the second trimester when my triple-screen test results, an expanded AFP test, came back with a 1:71 chance that the baby had Down Syndrome. However, our worries were soon relieved when the amnio results came back showing that all of his chromosomes lined up normally and we were having a boy. I was labeled high risk and told to come back for another ultrasound at 28 weeks. The 28 week ultrasound test results were normal, so I looked forward to my third trimester.



preeclampsia and sent me directly to the hospital.

I spent about 24 hours in the hospital being monitored and received two betamethasone shots to help with the baby's lung development. During that time, my lab numbers improved and my OB sent me home on strict bed rest. I began thinking of ideas for projects that I could do on the couch and wondering how I would survive another month and a half without going crazy from boredom. As it turns out, I never had a chance to get going on any of those projects.

Over the weekend, I started feeling worse and worse. I was having trouble breathing while sleeping and starting having gastrointestinal problems as well. By Tuesday, I was really starting to feel miserable. My follow-up appointment with my OB was the last of the day and it was close to 5:00 pm by the time I saw her. By then, I knew I was having the baby that night. I was in terrible

pain, which I much later found out was liver failure due to HELLP Syndrome. Protein was spilling into my urine and my blood pressure was sky high. My OB explained that my health condition was worsening and that it was best to deliver the baby right away to prevent damage to my organs. She sent us straight to the hospital for lab work and to be prepped for a c-section.

I finally got some pain relief at the hospital. I was also started on a magnesium sulfate drip to prevent seizures. Before I knew it, I was in the operating room. I was feeling so ill that I couldn't look at my husband and barely saw my little purple son before he was whisked away.

Daniel Martin Lascola was born at 7:44 pm by emergency c-section weighing just 3lbs., 6 ounces. He spent 45 days in the NICU. The first two-and-a-half days he required intubation and then he was weaned off of breathing assistance. It

Inside...

Premie of the Month.....	1, 6
Calendar of Events.....	2
Fleurville Bag Winner	
Program Updates.....	3
Holiday Wishes.....	4-5,7
Photo Collage.....	6

On Wednesday, July 21st I was lying down on the couch at home when I noticed one of my ankles looked swollen--I was at 31 weeks and 5 days. I found our blood pressure monitor and took my blood pressure. It was very high. The next morning my blood pressure was still high, so I called my OB and she had me come in right away. To my surprise, my OB said I had

See **Daniel**, page 5...

Preemies Today's Special Holiday Edition

Preemies Today
P.O. Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

Founded:
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web:
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Preemies Today is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to provide outreach and support programs to families of infants born prematurely beginning at birth and throughout childhood.

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Calendar of Events

December

Parent Support Meeting

December 12th, 7:30 pm
Barnes and Nobles, Fair Lakes, VA

Preemies Today Holiday Party

December 9th, 3:30 pm
With Music Therapist Myra Parker Goodrich
Reston Regional Library, Reston, VA

Holiday Cookie Exchange

Bring cookies to assemble for local NICU families.
December 15th, 7pm, Bethesda, Maryland
or
December 16th, 2 pm, Burke, VA
Contact: laurengreenberg@preemiestoday.org

January

Parent Support Meeting

January 9th, 7:30 pm
Barnes and Nobles, Fair Lakes, VA

Mailbox: Congratulations!

A special congratulations goes to **Sonia Mehta** for winning our Fleurville bag which was generously donated to Preemies Today by **Fleurville Inc.** To see some of their amazing bags please go to www.fleurville.com Thank you Fleurville!

Mary Annon Cannon, Heather Hall, and Connie Bezanson were our 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place winners. Each winner received one gift certificate from Mabels Labels for one big combo pack, one camp/school pack, or one iron-on tag mates. Thank you Mabels Labels at www.mabel.ca

Program Updates

Holiday Giving/Celebrations

Preemies Today has a lot of exciting things going on during the months of November and December. The holidays in the NICU can be a difficult time and Preemies Today hopes to relieve some of the stress by providing Holiday cards and cookies for NICU families. We also offer a holiday gathering for families to meet one another.

◆**National Members:** You can participate in the holiday card giving. Please contact your local NICU and speak to a social worker, head nurse, or clinical nurse specialist to see if a non-religious holiday card can be distributed by nurses to NICU families. Then, send us the contact name, address, and approximate number of cards needed. The number of cards we provide is in relation to the number of beds in each NICU.

Local members: If you are unsure if holiday cards are distributed to your baby's NICU, then contact us at info@premiestoday.org or call 703-552-0163.

Cookie Exchange This has become an annual tradition. Not only do we get to sample great cookies, but we get to pass along holiday cheer to the local NICUs. If you are interested in participating in the VA or MD exchange please contact Lauren Greenberg at laurengreenberg@premiestoday.org for the details.

Holiday Gathering: For the first time this year we will be having two holiday gatherings. We will host one in Virginia and one in Maryland to help better support families in both areas. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please RSVP at events@premiestoday.org

White House Ornaments: We have sold 150 ornaments! We need to sell more in order to meet our financial goals and have sufficient funds to support the local NICUs during the Holidays. If you have any family or friends interested in purchasing these ornaments, please contact Elaine Noto at elainenoto@premiestoday.org.

Play Groups--Interested in Joining?

Please contact Julie Kipers at juliekipers@premiestoday.org

Preemies Today Winter Holiday Party

Reston Regional Library, Reston, VA
December 9, 3:30-6 pm

With Special Guest:

Music Therapist Myra Parker Goodrich, LCSW, MT-BC
Therapeutic Rhythms, LLC

Music therapy can help attention, speech, & motor development

What We Do:

We offer local in-person support to families of preemies in the extended Washington DC metropolitan area. We provide on-line support to families of preemies located across the country and internationally.

Programs:

Monthly Newsletter
Parent Support Meetings
NICU Premie Care Packages
Telephone Hotline
Play Groups
Family Outings
Parent Education
Resources Brochures
Yahoo Group
Online Chat

Join Our Yahogroup!

Subscribe:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PreemiesToday/>

Meet wonderful parents from the DC metropolitan area as well as elsewhere in the United States.

Volunteer

Email us at info@premiestoday.org for more information.

Dream Dinners

For Premies Today Members, Family and Friends

February 26th 2007 from 5pm-8pm
at 2 locations:

Richland Business Center on Rte 7
21430 Cedar Drive #107
Sterling, VA 20164

and Rockville Pike 1701 Rockville
Pike, Space B-7 Rockville, MD 20852

**More information to follow in the
January Newsletter**

Wishing You Hope, Joy, and Happiness

We asked parents to send in their holiday wishes, developmental milestones, or messages of hope for their child to help us bring in the new year! Thank you to all of those that contributed!

Padraig Ryan Hall
Gestation: 35 weeks
Birth weight: 6lbs., 9 ounces
Age: 2 years old
Message: My holiday wish for Padraig and his big brother Aidan is world peace. All children deserve to enjoy the unabated freedoms that a harmonious planet has to offer.
Submitted by: Heather Hall, mom to two preemies

Claire Mackenzie Campbell
Gestation: 26 weeks, 2 days
Birth weight: 1 lb., 8 ounces
Current Age: 4 years old
Virginia Isabel Campbell
Gestation: 26 weeks, 2 days
Birth weight: 1 lb., 8 ounces
Current Age: 4 years old
Message: Every day is a blessing!
Submitted by: Mary Ashton Campbell

Emily Brown
Gestation: 26 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 1 ounce
Current Age: 29 months
Adjusted age: 26 months
Message: Blessed miracles really do happen!
Submitted by: Susan Brown, proud grandmother

Nicole Vienna Behrns
Gestation: 27 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 6 ounces
Current age: 18 months
Message: Our fighters are the best this world has to offer.
Submitted by: Margaret Behrns

Giovanni
Gestation: 25 weeks, 6 days
Birth weight: 1lb., 15 ounces
Current age: 1 year old
Message: Giovanni has taught me to see every little thing as a blessing.
Submitted by: Maria Zirpoli

Bailey Osborne
Gestation: 25 weeks
Birth weight: 676 grams
Current age: 9 years old
Aimee-Rose Osborne
Gestation: 34 weeks, 5 days
Birth weight: 4lbs., 13 ounces
Current age: 4 years old
Message: With love from New Zealand!!
Submitted by: Amanda Osborne

Catalina Andreyra Bartlett "Cattie"
Gestation 30 weeks
Birth weight 3 lbs., 5 ounces
Current age: Day 15
Message: Wishing you all the best in 2008!

Business During This Holiday Season!

Nichlas John Wickenheiser-Lawrence "Nicky"

Gestation 24 weeks, 1 day
Birth weight: 1 lb., 9 ounces
Current age: 18 months
Message: A mighty oak can grow from the tiniest acorn.

Submitted by: Mom Nicole

Daniel

Gestation: 32 weeks
Birth weight: 3 lbs., 6 ounces
Current age: 3 years old
Message: Daniel is in preschool now. He is the youngest in his class, but he's doing great!

Zachary

Gestation: 35 weeks
Birth weight: 5 lbs., 8 ounces
Current age: 18 months
Message: Zach is a chatty little guy. He is saying about 5 dozen words already!

Submitted by: Lynn Lascola

Alexander Christian Ferrari

Gestation: 32 weeks, 6 days
Birth weight: 4 lbs., 1 ounce
Current age: 3 years old
Message: Who could imagine how beautiful, healthy, and strong you would become?

Austin Mehta

Gestation: 25 Weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 12 ounces
Age: 5
Message: Small package; huge personality!
Submitted by: Mom Sonia

Aidan

Gestation: 30 weeks
Birth weight: 3 lbs., 2 ounces.
Current age: 14 months
Message: We love you so!

Ethan Lee Salguero

Gestation: 26 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 10 ounces
Current age: 3½ years
Message: My sweet miracle boy--another precious story of survival. His dimpled smiles and exuberant laugh bring us so much joy every day.

Submitted by: Susan Salguero

Zachary Chae

Gestation: 25 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 12 ounces
Current age: 3 ½ years old
Message: We thank God for all his many talents and even his struggles, because that is what has shaped his character. He's our precious gift from God.

Submitted by: Sara and Matt Chae

Julia Emma Matthews

Gestation: 28 weeks
Birth weight: 2 lbs.
Current Age: 9 months
Message: Having premature babies has made me a stronger person.

Marayla Kate Matthews

Gestation: 28 weeks
Birth weight: 2 lbs., 6 ounces
Current Age: 9 months
Message: The road is long, but the rewards are sweet.

Soffian

Gestation: 23 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 3 ounces
Current age: 8 months, 2 weeks
(CA 4 months, 3 weeks)
Message: Baby Soffian is a miracle and inspiration to overcome all obstacles.

Submitted by: Mom Linda and Dad Sacha

Daniel continued from page 1...

was discovered he had PDA, but thankfully it closed on its own with the help of medication. A head ultrasound found he had a choroid plexus cyst and Grade I bleed on the left side of his brain that lasted his entire NICU stay. His toughest preemie issue by far was related to eating. He was diagnosed with reflux and digested food quite slowly as well. He had a weak suck and most often was too tired to finish a feeding. At almost five weeks of age, he was given a blood transfusion. This seemed to help a bit, but it was another ten days until the NICU doctors finally agreed that it was time for Daniel to come home. September 10, 2004, six days before he was due to be born, Daniel came home weighing 5lbs., 8 ounces.

"Feedings continued to be a constant struggle over the next six months."

nine months was off of the bottom of the growth chart in weight and at the 5% for height grew to the 25% for weight and 50% for height in just three months! At his one year appointment, his nurse measured him three times. She couldn't believe the tremendous growth she was seeing!

Around the time of Daniel's first birthday, we finally felt we could breathe a sigh of relief. We now believed we had a typical little boy. Daniel had caught up in size to his peers. Also, at his one year adjusted NICU follow-up evaluation, we were told he was at or above his age level in every category. What a miracle! In addition, he had outgrown his reflux and we were finally able to discontinue his medication.

Feedings continued to be constant struggle over the next six months. Daniel never figured out how to breastfeed. Two months after he came home, I decided to give up the demands of the breast, bottle, pumping routine. It took him anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour to drink his bottle and then another half hour for me to pump and store more milk. Instead I focused on pumping and bottle feeding. I was able to keep this up until I weaned him from breast milk to Neosure at nine months of age. Around this time, Daniel really started to enjoy feeding himself and we finally saw our tiny little guy put some meat on his bones. In fact, our boy who at

I feel very fortunate that Daniel has done so well--he is a typically developing three-year-old. Daniel just started preschool this fall and he loves it! He is a smart and very curious little monkey. I am so pleased that he appears to not have suffered any life-long scars from his rough start. Thankfully, my body had completely recovered by the time Daniel was two months old. On the one-year anniversary of Daniel's homecoming, I became pregnant again. May 2, 2006 Daniel got the best gift ever--a little brother named Zachary.



May All Your Holiday Wishes Come True...



Mia Cannon

Gestation: 32 weeks
Birth weight: 2 lbs., 8 ounces
Current age: 3.5 years old
Message: Miracles do happen!

Submitted by: Mary Ann Cannon

Michael Jefferey Dineus

Gestation: 24 weeks, 0 days
Birth weight: 1 lb., 4 ounces
Current Age: 4 months, 3 weeks adjusted age
Message: My miracle baby is the love of my life!!!

Nicole Cruthirds

Gestation: 34 weeks
Birth weight: 4 lbs., 6 ounces
Current age: 3 1/2 years
Message: Hope, love, and generosity come in the smallest of packages.

Bradley Cruthirds

Gestation: 33 weeks
Birth weight: 3lbs., 5 ounces
Current age: 16 months
Message: Small miracles touch our lives with wonder.

Submitted by: Danette Cruthirds

Ree Thomas Henken

Gestation: 32 weeks
Birth weight: 3 lbs., 4 ounces
Current age: 15 months
Message: There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is. -Albert Einstein (fellow preemie)

Nikhil R. Kumar

Gestation: 27 weeks
Birth weight: 2 lbs.
Current age: 9 months, 2 weeks
Message: Keep smiling as you always do.

Siddharth R. Kumar

Gestation: 27 weeks
Birth weight: 2 lbs., 1 ounce
Current age: 9 months, 2 weeks
Message: Tough man with a soft heart.

Gestation: 28 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 11 ounces
Current age: 16 months
Message: Your strength and determination are amazing!

Kaye Berganson

Kylie Reece

Gestation: 28 weeks, 6 days
Birth weight: 2 lbs., 9 ounces
Current Age: 7 months
Message: Kylie is now rolling over from her back to her tummy. She's growing so fast!

Vikas Sai Kotla

Gestation: 23 weeks, 5 days
Birth weight: 1 lb., 3 ounces
Current age: 14 months, 10 months corrected age
Message: Though he has some ways to go, we are so happy to see him crawl all over the place and trying to stand up holding on to anything. Many thanks to his great doctors, nurses, support group, and our early intervention program.

Andrew Fronczek

Gestation: 31 weeks
Birth weight: 3 lbs., 12 ounces
Current age: 2 years old
Message: We are so proud of the progress you've made. You are such a loveable little boy and have enriched so many lives around you. Merry Christmas. You are so loved.
Submitted by: Joe and Charlene Fronczek

Truman Kim

Gestation: 26 weeks
Birth weight: 1 lb., 8 ounces
Current age: 10 weeks
Message: Our little hero has shown us how beautiful life really is. We send our holiday blessings to all.

Membership/Subscription Information:

We offer the Preemies Today newsletter, family outings, parent support groups, preemie play-groups, and "A Friend to Talk To," our call-in line, for parents and families of preemies. Membership in our organization is free.

For a free subscription to our newsletter and to join Preemies Today please email us at info@preemiestoday.org or you may go to our website at **www.PreemiesToday.org** and click on "Join Us."

This newsletter was funded by a Community Grant from the March of Dimes. This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. The opinions expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the March of Dimes.

Don't Miss These Events!

Parent Support Meeting

December 12th, 7:30 pm, Barnes and Nobles
Fairfax, VA

Winter Holiday Party

December 9th, 3:30 pm
Reston Regional Library, Reston, Virginia

Please RSVP to events@preemiestoday.org

**PREEMIES
TODAY**

P. O. Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

Do you need to talk to someone who understands the preemie experience? If so, call the "Friend to Talk to" line at
1-888-712-3208
or
703-552-0163