

Starting Life in the NICU

The Jandrins brought their baby boy home because of you

Danielle and Justin Jandrin were filled with excitement in the fall of 2018 as they prepared for parenthood. At 28 weeks, the pregnancy preparation checklists suggest finalizing the baby registry and taking a childbirth class, but Danielle suddenly found herself confined to a hospital bed.

Her doctors were already monitoring the baby's small size, but tests revealed that Danielle had pre-eclampsia (high-blood pressure) and HELLP syndrome (elevated liver enzymes). She recalls, "My doctor told me that I was staying until my baby was born and I thought, 'you want me to stay here for three months?!'"

Two days later, Silas was born via C-section at 1 pound, 6.9 ounces and 12 inches long. The moment Danielle heard Silas' first cry she was overwhelmed with gratitude and joy, but also felt real fear. Thankfully, donors like you support a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital. Danielle and Justin saw their baby boy for only a few moments before the NICU team whisked Silas away to attend to his needs.

"It was scary to see him in the NICU isolette with tubes down his tiny throat. I wondered what I did wrong and what I could have done better to prevent this," she says. But Danielle had done nothing to cause this.

She remembers how the doctors shared information in terms she and Justin could understand and the nurses happily gave updates no matter what time of day or night the Jandrins called. "It was a relief to know Silas was in good hands," says Danielle. "We also leaned on our strong faith asking God to watch over him, bringing our pastor in to say prayers and baptizing him in the NICU."



After three and a half months in the NICU, Silas had grown to over seven pounds. The only thing keeping him in the hospital was his refusal to drink from a bottle. The Jandrins spent a weekend in the NICU's family area - a room, funded by donors like you, that allows families a "practice run" caring for their child as if they were at home. Preferring his parents over the nurses, Silas drank from the bottle that weekend.

Danielle cried tears of joy that Monday when the doctor called and asked, "Do you want to take your little boy home today?" Silas came home at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 4 - 105 days after he was born.

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Today, Silas is an energetic two-year-old who loves being a big brother. He is in the local “Birth to 3” program to ensure he’s reaching his developmental milestones. “I am just amazed at how much he’s growing,” Danielle gushes, “It was so scary in the beginning – to be where he is now just amazes me. His smile and giggles bring so much joy to our family. He is our miracle baby.”

Hundreds of families spend the first days, weeks, or even months with their child in the HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital NICU. Because of donors like you, this department is full of expert professionals and specialized equipment dedicated to caring for the littlest patients. Your support makes homecomings like Silas’ possible. Thank you!



New CO₂ Monitors Help Care for the Most Critical Babies

You give newborns the best possible start

In 2020, 328 babies were cared for in the HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital NICU. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) provides specialized care for infants born extremely prematurely, critically ill or needing surgical intervention. Thanks to donor generosity, caring for the most critical of these newborns will soon be made easier.

Two new transcutaneous carbon dioxide monitors will be arriving soon, thanks to you. These monitors continuously check CO₂ levels for the most critical babies, those just taken off ventilators and those caregivers are working to keep off ventilators. Monitoring these levels is very important because a dramatic shift can cause additional problems for these little ones including bleeding in the brain.

The current machine is reaching the end of its life. Without a transcutaneous CO₂ monitor, caregivers would need to frequently draw and test a baby’s blood to measure his/her oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. Monitoring this way is not only invasive, it can cause infants with extremely low volumes of blood to become anemic and need transfusions.

Thankfully, your support made it possible to not only replace the current transcutaneous CO₂ monitor, but purchase an additional machine. They will allow caregivers to continuously observe a baby’s carbon dioxide levels and adjust care quickly and accurately if needed. Thank you for bringing the best care possible to our tiniest patients.



Memorializing an Unborn Child

You comfort grieving parents like Shana and Jim

The national Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support (Share) organization estimates that 1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss. For these parents, mourning their child can be a very lonely experience. There is often no funeral where friends and family share their condolences and offer comfort. Many times even a couple's closest family and friends don't know they were expecting.

Shana and Jim Ledvina were only days away from seeing their baby on an ultrasound for the first time when they experienced a miscarriage. It was devastating. "We struggled to get pregnant again after having our daughter, Nora, so we were really excited about this pregnancy," shares Shana. "I experienced some bleeding and cramping so we went in to get it checked out. Then we learned there was no heartbeat. It was the worst day of my life."

Shana opted to schedule a dilation and curettage (D&C) to help her body through the process of miscarriage. As she sat in the office waiting for the procedure, she began wondering, "Where is my baby going? What will happen to it?" and started to panic.

Fortunately, a chaplain was able to tell the Ledvins about the memorial services hosted by the local Share chapter. This donor-funded program, based at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital, supports families who are grieving pregnancy and infant loss. For some parents, this service is a memorial only, but for others, it is the actual burial of their tiny baby. For Shana and Jim, attending the memorial service four months after the miscarriage was comforting. "It was such an amazing experience filled with people of all denominations grieving and sharing in this loss together," Shana says.

"Miscarriage is not talked about much and it pains me to know that others don't have the support that the Share program offered us."

In addition to the memorial, local Share services include monthly support group meetings, one-on-one support with families who've experienced similar losses, a Christmas candlelight vigil of remembrance and referrals to additional community resources. All of this is funded by donors like you.

By supporting our hospitals, you offered Shana the comfort she needed in that procedure room. You provided her and Jim with a resting place for their baby and a place they can visit in remembrance with their daughter Nora and her new baby brother, Silas.



Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support, Inc.

A national program founded by one of our Hospital Sisters



Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc. is a national organization with the mission to serve those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or in the first few months of life. They serve parents, grandparents, siblings, and other family members through 75 chapters in 29 states, including a chapter at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital.

This local chapter isn't our hospitals' only tie to the program. Share was founded by Sister Jane Marie Lamb, a member of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis – the same religious order that founded St. Vincent Hospital and now operates St. Vincent and St. Mary's Hospitals through the Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS).

Sr. Jane Marie, a maternity nurse, founded SHARE (Source of Help for Airing & Resolving Experience) in 1977 at the request of a grieving family. "The word 'share' seemed to be symbolic of what we did and we like the concept of sharing their grief, since so many people are isolated in their grief," she said.



Upcoming fundraiser benefits Child Life

Racing for a Reason Saturday, July 31 Shawano Speedway

Shawano Speedway is hosting the 11th annual Racing for a Reason 30 Late Model Special. Proceeds from the bucket drop benefit Child Life at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital.

If you or someone you know are interested in hosting a fundraiser to benefit one of our hospitals, programs, or services, please contact us at WI-Foundations@hshs.org or 920-844-5928.

Double or Triple Your Giving Employer gift matching

Many employers encourage their employees to support nonprofits by offering a matching gift program. Sometimes they even double or triple your gift to our hospital! Many companies also match gifts from retirees and spouses.

Every employer's program is different, so ask your HR representative if your company has a matching gift program today.

