

## Joshua's Story



On Monday August 9, 2010 it was the day of my 40<sup>th</sup> week + 1 day routine check-up, a stress test was given because of the duration of this pregnancy, there, the strip recorded that Joshua's heart rate was decreasing with each contraction; none the less, the resident attending us that day said we should come back by Friday for an ultrasound. We felt something was wrong and had to persuade our way into Labor and Delivery for the ultrasound to be performed that same day. The ultrasound did not show anything unusual in Joshua, but as we were being told to leave and come back on Friday for another test, Joshua's heart stopped. His first resuscitation was done right there in-utero, followed by an emergency C-Section. When he was delivered, he passed the Apgar Test with high 8-9 ratings. When we saw him, we sensed something was terribly wrong with our baby; he was too pale and frowning. We murmured that to the resident. 30 minutes into his first hour of life our fear was confirmed, Joshua had another cardiac arrest followed by seizures, he had no blood, he had been transfusing his blood to me for about 3 weeks before that Monday and because he was fighting to stay alive, his body was rapidly producing new blood cells which were too immature to coagulate, resulting in a severe left and frontal hemorrhage in his brain. Again, his acid level provoked multiple organ shot down; he endured kidney failure, edema, the valve in his heart did not close, he was heavily intubated, using a ventilator to breath... it was said that he was not

going to survive, his doctors openly said that there was no way our child had a survival chance, that is was a matter of hours or maybe minutes. We were prompted to call our Pastor to say good-bye to our Josh. His Neonatologist kept on coming into our room with more bad news every 10, 15, 20 minutes, at one point we thought it couldn't get worse, the doctors kept on insisting us to quit any hope for survival and even asked my husband if he understood the language therefore the magnitude of Joshua's condition, (talk about bedside manners!). Our trust is in God! We replied.

Thankfully Joshua survived, we all witnessed a miracle. Joshua was released from Robert Wood Johnson's NICU after 33 days to go for rehabilitation at the Children's Specialized Hospital in New Brunswick. Maximum amount of therapy has been prescribed; Josh is now 18 months and doesn't walk, crawl nor speak. In addition, his head is not growing. He needs to see a Neurosurgeon, a Cardiologist, and needs another swallow study to follow up on his dysphagia. He is young and much delayed; his Pediatrician is recommending us to him to go to CHOP to see if they can do something about the infarct left in his brain from the hemorrhage that is preventing the cerebral fluid from circulating and hindering brain growth. His frustration level is so high that he bangs and scratches his head constantly, we are now wondering if he lives in pain He will soon see an Orthopedic (for his feet go inwards when he stands) to look at adaptive equipment which is much needed to keep him mobile. This has definitely been a humbling experience, we cherish every day of life God has granted us with Joshua. He is such a fighter and keeps on letting us know he plans to keep the fight. We went from him not making eye contact, keeping a frowning expression all the time and a lost in space kind of look in his eyes, to all smiles when he sees one of us enter the room. That is what keeps us going. Every time a couple is expecting a child they hope and pray that is a healthy one. Joshua is our miracle!

