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Posted by Linda

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My brother and his wife were awaiting the birth of their first child. But, very suddenly, there were complications. When I received a call telling me that I had a 2 lb., 6 oz. baby niece, my joy was hand in hand with fear. And it broke my heart that my sister-in-law felt no joy at all. I will never forget opening the door to her hospital room and seeing her lying in the dark – overcome with disappointment and feelings of failure. My brother and I stared into the incubator at this tiny girl who wasn't quite ready to come into this world. What should have been the happiest day of their lives was the beginning of an anxiety-filled journey.

The first sign of heightened hope...she was breathing on her own!!

In the ongoing days and weeks, the situation – and emotions – began to brighten. There is no way to express how grateful they were for the caring hands and expertise of the NICU staff. How grateful they were for the guidance, comfort and support they received. How grateful they were when, five weeks later, they were able to take their little girl home! During that challenging time period, they weren't aware of the ways in which the work of the March of Dimes helped their daughter. But they are now...and will never forget it. My niece grew slowly, but surely; had no subsequent health issues; and is now a beautiful young woman.

For every expectant couple, no truer words were ever spoken: "As long as our baby is healthy..."

Nearly half a million babies are born too soon each year. Each one of them needs our help.

REGISTER now for March for Babies, and if you can't walk with us, please **DONATE.**