

My Beautiful Daughter Isabella



Sunday, September 6, 2009 at 6:29pm

Isabella- This photo montage was created after Isabella last heart surgery at Riley Hospital. We attached a thank you note and posted it at the Starbucks where Todd worked. We had an out pouring of love and support from that community.

My daughter was born on October 24th 1995. I became very ill with toxemia and was told by my doctor that I was going to have to have a cesarean that day because I would not survive. My daughter was born 3 months early into my pregnancy premature and weighting only 2lbs 12 oz. The next day after her birth as I lay in my bed a group of doctors surrounded me and told me that were going to have to perform open heart surgery on my infant daughter. My husband was not there yet and it was very early in the morning I was still groggy and still pretty sick myself. I was in shock and stunned and wondering if I was dreaming. I only remember seeing her beautiful face for a brief moment never to be able to hold her in my arms like most mothers get to do with their newborns. I still had not been able to visit neonatal unit because I was not out of the woods yet. So as these doctors are informing me of her impending heart surgery my mind was just in such a fog and not even comprehending what the doctors were saying. They tell me they are going to have to perform the surgery right away for her survival. I can't even describe that feeling of dread that overwhelms your being when some delivers news to you like that. I had to sign several release forms and then the team of doctors left my bed side and my spirit was in dismay. My husband arrived soon after this devastating news and I was trying to explain all this new developments and what the doctors were trying to explain to me. I didn't get to see Isabella before they whisked her off to surgery and that was very disappointing to me. I wanted to hold her tiny frail body and tell her I love her and that I would see her again.

We all waited for the head surgeon to get back with us and the news was encouraging, she had some thing called, tetralogy of fallot a problem with her pulmonary heart valve. This valve would have to be replaced every 5-10 years depending on her health. Continual surgery and medical attention were going to be an essential part of our lives. With these updates for this valve she could live a fairly normal life. Her first surgery was successful and her survival was looking good.

About three days later I was finally given the go ahead to see her for the first time since her surgery. I had a wonderful nurse Jan Bump, still remember her name. She came in my room and had a chat with me. She brushed my hair and put it up for me. She asked me if I had ever been to a neonatal unit I responded "no". She told me what to expect when I see Isabella for the first time. She was very delicate in her wording and very sweet. She told me "Isabella has a lot of tubes in her body" and what function each tube was for. She told me that "she is naked and laying what looks like heat lamps and that she is very small". As she wheeled me down to the unit I remember feeling such trepidation over my body I just did not know what to expect even with all the information Jan gave me. I washed up and pushed those big hospital doors open. Jan wheeled me over to her bed and there see was my little Isabella. Tiny but long, tubes

everywhere. I just broke down and cried. Long winded breathless. I reached out for her tiny hand and held it in mine and just said "I'm so sorry my sweet pea, I'm so sorry". I felt so humbled and overwhelmed by the sight of her. Jan said "you are going to hold her", and I was feeling very unsure of this because she was so tiny and hooked up to a lot of stuff. When I did finally hold her it was so surreal experience. Happiness and sadness all at the same time.

After two and a half months in the hospital we finally got to take our baby home. I worked for Nordstrom at the time and took family leave to stay home for a few weeks before I had to go back to work, I had the health insurance coverage.

The time flew by with preemie training and frequent hospital visits. When I did finally go back to work it was hard to leave her behind. Luckily my husband worked from home and was able to stay with her while I worked.

Isabella has since under gone some stent procedures and several open heart surgery valve repairs. She is a healthy 13 year old today. She does have some other health issues and complications from the premature birth. She has vision problems, and problems with her teeth. All these things are correctable.

One of the reasons I am posting this story is because there is a lot of controversy around health care reform in our country right now. I usually don't get caught up in politics but this is an issue that directly affects my family and my daughter. My husband lost his job recently with Starbucks and we now have no insurance coverage. We are still paying for past procedures from various doctors and hospitals. We have always maintained coverage for our family until now. We have applied for Medicaid but are currently waiting to hear back from them. My daughter will be needing future heart surgery and hopefully she can wait until we finds jobs with health coverage and hope they will accept her with a preexisting condition.

We are not alone in this situation. Many other Americans are with out health coverage because of lay offs, downsizing and out sourcing . Some Americans are small business owners and can't afford the high cost of Health Insurance for themselves or their employees. Some Americans have jobs with an option for health coverage but opt out because it is too expensive and they don't make a lot of money in the first place(minimum wage employees). Some Americans are independent contractors and can't afford independent health insurance.

So there is a huge problem, not to mention the moral and ethical obligation to our American citizens who do pay taxes. We can no longer turn our backs on the sick, and weak and hope the problem will disappear. It is a disgrace that we are so caught up in fights and heated debates over this issue. People are losing there homes and going into bankruptcy over mounting doctor and hospital bills. Not to mention the emotional and physical drain on a family during a catastrophic illness. The health insurance companies will find ways to rescind their paying customers who get catastrophic illnesses so they can profit. You are just a number to them, they do not care about your health. I know because I'm still battling with my health insurance to pay out claims they were responsible for paying.

We can NOT afford NOT to do something NOW about health care reform. We are just wasting precious time debating this issue. Someone or group has to take some initiative and realize that Universal Health Care is not evil. We as a society could give or extend a human life to another human because they can now get affordable health care. You never know when you serious illness or extended hospital stay will affect you. I do not want to see any more hard working Americans wiped out financially because of these dilemmas. Please if you are in involved in this debate please check the facts.

Read the Health Care Reform Bill set before The House. Or read the portions that are concerning you. I

found the bill online and did read sections of it, it is not that complicated to comprehend. Trust me I'm no scholar! Look for: America's Affordable Health Choice Act Of 2009, Health Care Bill 2009 Dingel, Rangall, Waxman .Miller, Stark, Pallone, and Andrews. Health Insurance Reform.HR 3200.

Just an average American citizen without Health Insurance Coverage~ Kelly Oswalt