FROM THE NICU TO NOW

2026 NICU REUNION

Celebrating our graduates and their journeys

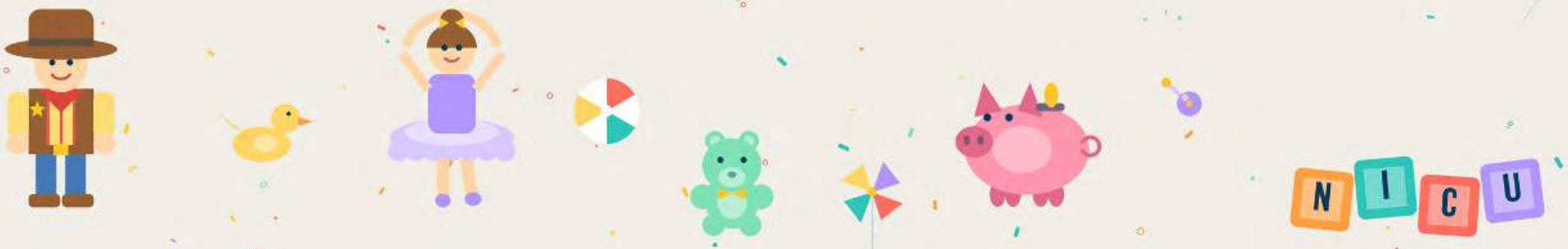


UCLA MATTEL Childrens Hospital

2026 NICU REUNION

WELCOME, NICU FAMILIES

Sunday, Oct. 11, 2026 · Noon to 3 pm · UCLA Royce Quad



UCLA MATTEL Childrens Hospital

OUR GRADUATE JOURNEYS

Every milestone deserves a celebration





ABNER J.

BORN May 11, 2026 **NICU SM**

Abner was born at 27 weeks and was in the NICU for 113 days. The thing I remember most is all the sound machines and going everyday not knowing what tomorrow would look like.

TODAY

Abner has now been home for 1 month. He has come so far since he got home. He loves to stare at people when they talk and sometimes gives his opinion. He loves to be carried and rocked around.





AILANY P.

BORN March 12, 2025
NICU Both

Our baby was born at 27 weeks, weighing just 1 lb. 14.9 oz, but thankfully, she did not have any major health complications. She spent approximately two and a half months in the NICU, and during that time, we learned countless things.…

FROM THE NICU TO NOW

Today, our little girl is 18 months old, and watching her grow fills our hearts with so much joy and gratitude. She has learned how to walk, and she loves to dance, sing, swim, take baths, and explore… Seeing her happy, curious, and full of life reminds us every day just how far she has come.



ANGELA Y.

BORN March 27, 2025 **NICU** RR

Angela was in the NICU for 65 days. I will always remember getting to hold her for the very first time. She was so tiny and the nurses coached me every step of the way.

TODAY

Angela is a feisty little girl. Her hobbies include following her brother around, babbling at us/bossing us around, and playing with mommy's makeup.



ANNALISA W.

BORN Nov. 25, 2024 **NICU** SM

Annalisa was in the SM NICU for 6 weeks due to preeclampsia and was born a tiny but mighty 3.65 Lbs. Though she came out with a 1 APGAR score, she soon became “the baby with the loudest set of lungs.”…

NOW...

Annalisa is going to start preschool soon! She is just as loud today as she was on day 1. Her favorite things include saying the word “butt,” fire and garbage trucks, and saying hi to Amazon / postal workers…



ARABELLA A.

BORN Sept. 6, 2024 **NICU** SM

Arabella was admitted into the NICU at 10 days old following surgery for Intestinal Malrotation and Volvulus. We were there for 15 days. Our nurses have forever been in our hearts for the care they gave both me and my baby.

TODAY...

Arabella is still the strong willed girl the NICU staff grew to know and love. She is now 2 years old, blowing through growth and developmental charts. She loves art, singing, dancing, and chatting up anyone who will listen!



ARLO

BORN April 25, 2026 **NICU** SM

He was in the NICU 52 days. What we remember the most was how amazing and loving all of the NICU staff was, they very quickly became like family to us!

NOW...

Arlo loves to babble and play his toy piano with his feet! He recently began conquering tummy time, rolling out of tummy time (haha!)... Arlo loves water, he would spend all day in the bathtub if we would let him! He also recently discovered he has 3 cat siblings... anytime they come to check him out he erupts into a fit of giggles!



AYDEN A.

BORN June 20, 2013 **NICU** RR

Ayden was in the NICU for 3 months and I remember it was very hard to leave him there every night. However; the staff was amazing and very supportive which helped everything make it a bit easier.

TODAY

Ayden is currently in 8th grade. He loves swimming, playing basketball and skateboarding! He is such a fighter and cannot wait to see what more the future holds for him!





BRYLEE B.

BORN Sept. 17 NICU SM

Brylee was born at just 27 weeks, weighing only 2 pounds,
6 ounces. She spent 67 days in the NICU...Seeing her so tiny and surrounded by machines, wires, and medical equipment , wires, and medical equipment was one of the hardest experiences of our lives... but Brylee showed us from the very beginning just how strong she was.

TODAY

Brylee continues to grow and make us so proud! She is a strong, happy little girl who brings so much joy to our family...



CALEB ANTHONY G.

BORN April 21, 2025 **NICU** RR

Caleb was in the NICU unit for a month and 4 days. I remember all the nurses that helped him and they were so gentle and so understanding with what happened to Caleb.

TODAY

He’s doing good. He’s had two more surgeries for ostomy reversal. He did have two episodes of seizures but taking meds for it. He’s such a happy baby, giggling and laughing. Rolling around everywhere.

CATALEYA O.

BORN Dec 31, 2025 **NICU** RR

Cataleya was in the NICU/PEDS West for 72 days. We will never forget how strong and brave she was during that time, and how our family persevered especially spending so much time apart.

TODAY- Cataleya is 9 months old and thriving! She is no longer on any special care, just a little lady who loves to eat, smile, and play.



CHLOE E. & ETHAN E.

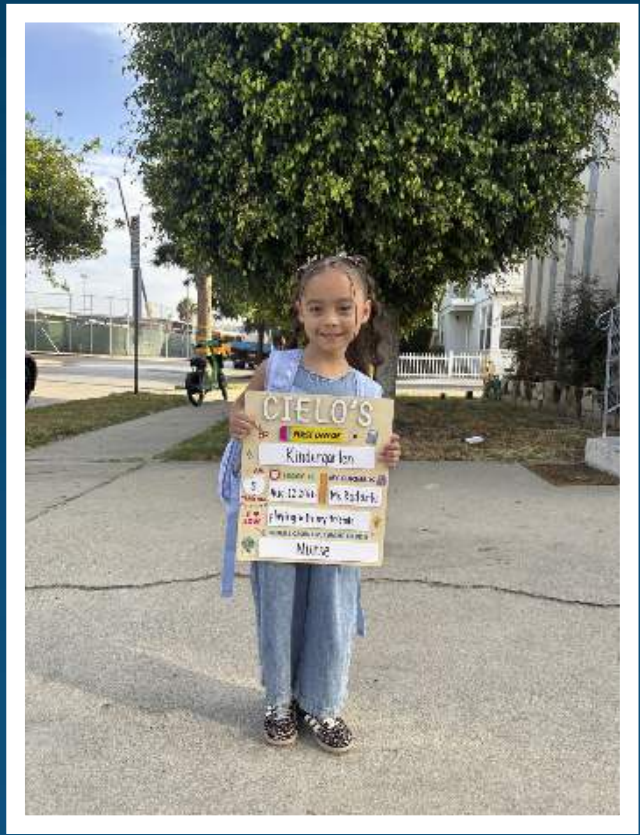
BORN Oct. 18, 2024 **NICU** RR

Chloe and Ethan were born 6 weeks premature on October 18, 2024. Chloe came home on November 6th and Ethan came home on November 11th. I remember the incredible team of Nurses and Doctors that supported us through our journey.

TODAY

Chloe and Ethan are doing so well! They turn 2 soon and they are both very happy kids. Every day they go for walks in our neighborhood and visit their favorite dogs, cats, and birds.





CIELO V.

BORN Aug. 11, 2021 NICU RR

Cielo was in the NICU for exactly 100 days! I remember all the kind nurses and doctors who helped the days feel lighter.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW

Cielo recently turned 5! She is in kindergarten and loves to go to school and play with friends!



DEVON D.

BORN June 25, 2008 **NICU** RR

Devon is a 26.5 micro-preemie twin, spent nine months in the NICU at Ronald Reagan Hospital. His journey was undoubtedly a rollercoaster, filled with uncertainty about each day's outcome.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW

Despite many challenges, he graduated from high school in 2026 and Devon is now enrolled in a trade school program for children with special needs.



DOMENIC N.

BORN Oct. 8, 2015 **NICU** RR

We were in the NICU for 3.5 months. I remember most the amazing nurses who taught me so much and got me through the hardest time. I learned how to care for my baby and also felt so supported. It is so hard to leave your baby... the nurses are so amazing...You know your child is taken care of, feeling loved when you're gone.

TODAY

Domenic is doing so well! He got rid of his feeding tube!!! That was a huge accomplishment and his fav meal is In-N-Out!!! He is in 5th grade and plays soccer, baseball and tennis. He also loves swimming! He is very social and loves planning get-togethers with his friends. His memory is also amazing...



EMMETT & WYATT H.

BORN Oct. 21, 2019 **NICU** SM

Wyatt spent 36 days in the NICU and Emmett spent 38 days. I remember being so happy they got to ride in the same basinet from the operating room to the NICU and how confident I was in the ability of the nurses to care for Emmett when we had to leave him in the hospital...

NOW...

The boys are in first grade and doing great! They love their friends, playing soccer and video games. Their favorite thing is Ghostbusters and are regularly out running around pretending to capture ghosts with their dog Ecto.



ENZO & CHLOE BACKUS

BORN Nov. 29, 2021 **NICU** Both

Both of my twins spent the first 90 days of their lives in the NICU. I remember living between fear and gratitude...

TODAY...

Both twins are doing great and are now in TK... Enzo loves playing soccer, building with LEGOs, and playing memory games. .. Chloe loves creating things with fuse beads and has such a caring nature...Both twins are bilingual and love playing with and learning from their big brother, Elon... Watching the three of them... has been one of my greatest joys.



ETHAN S.

BORN Nov. 12, 2021 **NICU** RR

Ethan was in the NICU for 19 days to gain weight after being severely growth restricted. I remember spending each day pumping and working on getting him to latch, which he did successfully and the lactation consultant was impressed...

TODAY...

Ethan is almost 5 years old with beautiful blue eyes, bouncing curly blonde hair and a megawatt smile. He is thriving in TK, loves playing with his friends and manipulating alpha-bots and magna-tiles.





EVERETT R.

BORN April 20, 2025 NICU SM

Everett unexpectedly came into the world 6 weeks early. He was in the NICU for 15 days. We have so much gratitude for each nurse, NP, neonatal physician, therapist (occupational, physical, musical), lactation consultant, social worker, discharge planner, and volunteer...

NOW...

Everett is 17 months old. He loves books, walking and talking (especially saying “uh-oh” and dropping something on purpose)... He also loves to clap, giggle and play peek-a-boo. We wish the UCLA Santa Monica NICU staff well and are so grateful for everything you provided us...



HARRIET H. (AKA HATTIE)

BORN Sept. 6, 2023 NICU SM

101 Days. We remember being so scared for her future but feeling surrounded by so many incredible people... She was born at 27 weeks weighing only 1lb. 11oz.... she was a fighter from the beginning...

TODAY...

Hattie is a thriving 3 year old...She keeps her family laughing with her silly faces, her funny jokes and her big personality. When the right song comes on she must drop everything and can't help but dance and sing... All our nurses warned us we had a feisty one on our hands and boy were they right. She is strong, smart, brave and determined! We love you Hattie!!



HENRY D.

BORN March 10, 2018 **NICU** RR

Henry was a 28 week preemie and spent 7 and a half weeks in the NICU. The amazing staff got us through! We couldn't have done it without Ancy, Mags, Shelly, and Dr Sabnis (and the rest of the team!).

TODAY...

Henry is 8 and a half and the best kid of all time! He loves breakdancing and building robots and is working on getting his krav maga yellow belt.



HOLLY H. C.

BORN Dec. 3, 2015 **NICU** RR

Holly was in the NICU for about 2-3 months. I remember how small she was and always trying to remove her oxygen. And the nurses would always be signing to her...

NOW...

She loves math and playing with Legos. She still has a strong personality as she did while she was in the NICU. She is now in the 5th grade making everyone around her smile.

JACOB T.

BORN Feb. 13, 2016 NICU SM

Jakey was in the NICU for 44 days. The care he received from Nurse Gretchen, Nurse Josie, and Nurse Michelle was excellent and put our minds at ease when we weren't present.

TODAY...

Jakey is extremely intelligent and kind, and just started 5th grade! Jakey loves science, robots, Minecraft, and Legos. Jakey loves Axolotl's and has a large collection of plushies.

JADAH BURT

BORN Dec. 28, 2025 NICU RR

Jadah was in the NICU for seven weeks. What I remember most was when she was airlifted to UCLA and almost placed on life support.

TODAY... She's doing great! At almost nine months you would never know she was so sick. She's incredibly smart for her age, always happy and smiling, just truly a joy.

JAMES M.

BORN June 20, 2009 NICU RR

NICU STORY: 6 weeks in the NICU... He was also in the unit for something other than being premature and so he was a fighter...

TODAY... He is about to graduate high school and has been playing soccer since he was 5. He has been on club soccer for many years. He has been to Spain and the UK.



JAZLENE C.

BORN Jan. 8, 2023 **NICU** RR

Jazlene was in and out of the NICU for 2.5 months.

TODAY... Jazlene is now 3 years old with amazing supportand she's in preschool, minor bumps in the road and health conditions and milestones... She'sthe most beautiful, friendly, and bright little girl you can ever come across. She's so outgoing and outspoken, intelligent and is a great big sister to her little brother. She loves amusement parks, coloring, going to the park, cartoons, cats, and playing with her toys. She has the best personality and humor.



JONATHAN "JJ" H. III

BORN Nov. 22, 2014 **NICU** RR

JJ spent the first 101 days of his life in the NICU after being bornwith congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH). He survived 15 days on ECMO and several surgeries.

TODAY... Today, JJ is a happy, funny, endlessly curious 11-year-old who has come an incredibly long way from those first 101 days in the NICU. JJ has an extraordinary love of math and physics... Last spring, at age 11, he audited a Mathematical Methods in Physics course at UCLA...He loves computers, coding, video games, Minecraft, and spending time with his younger sister and brother. He is funny, affectionate, quirky, and always thinking about something new and cool.



JUAN & PABLO P.

Juan: July 18, 2014 · Pablo: July 6, 2026
NICU RR

Juan and Pablo were both born premature and with fetal growth restriction. Weighing only 2 pounds and 1 pound. The Journey was long and difficult but we got them home.

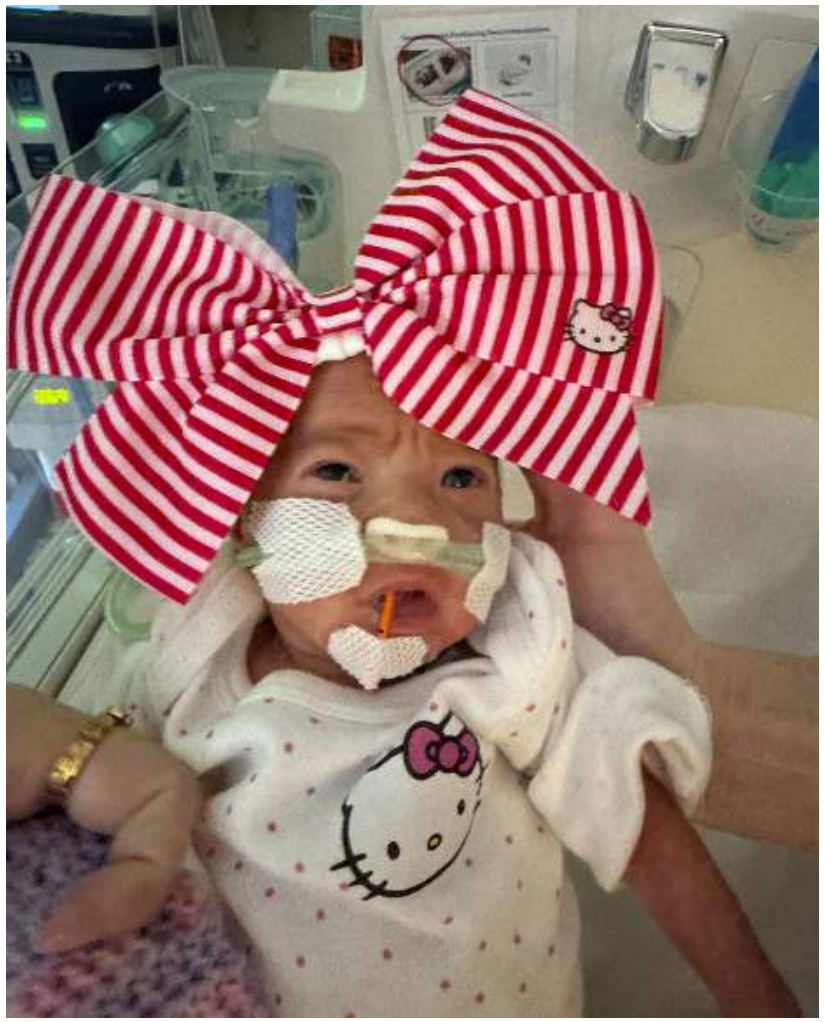


KAELANI R.

BORN May 22, 2019 **NICU** RR

143 days , Pod 1, bed 4. My dearest memory is holding my child for the first time , with the help of the nurse and RT...

TODAY... Kaelani is now seven years old. She loves music and dancing . She currently takes adaptive ballet. She loves going to Disneyland and shopping at target. She has made so many friends since starting school.



KAITLYN C.

BORN July 13, 2026 **NICU** RR

She is still in the NICU with our favorite nurses that doesn't just take good care of baby but also is very informative to parents regarding updates.

TODAY... She is good and growing fast.



KAYLEE T.

BORN Dec. 20, 2009 **NICU** RR

Kaylee spent her first 21 days in the UCLA NICU. Her family remembers the uncertainty of those early weeks, the doctors and nurses who guided them, and especially nurse Shelia's comforting smile and wonderful care.

NOW.. Kaylee is 16 years old and living her best life while continuing to face health challenges. She is completing her junior year of high school while attending junior college and is on track to earn Associate degrees in Deaf Studies with a 3.96 GPA. She is active with her horse, Veyron, and competed in her first dressage show...Kaylee is smart, determined, funny, compassionate, and incredibly strong.



LANA MARIE B. U.

BORN Sept. 21, 2024 NICU RR



We were at UCLA for roughly 2.5 months. The nurses and doctors were amazing.

NOW.. She is doing amazing!

Running, talking and giggling all day.



LANE & LOGAN L.

BORN Aug. 6, 2013 NICU RR

Lane was in the NICU for 4 1/2 months and Logan was there for 6 months. Born at 23 weeks they were 1 pound 6 ounces and 1 pound 12 ounces each, and had a lot of ups and downs in the NICU….

TODAY... Our boys are 13 and thriving! They are in 7th grade and both like art and science. They love to swim, play computer games and their dog, Coco. They are smart, funny, determined boys!

LONDON B.

BORN Sept. 2, 2007 NICU RR

NICU STORY — 10 days

TODAY... She’s in her second year of college at LSU



LUCA B.

BORN July 22, 2021 **NICU** RR

Luca was in the NICU for about 2 months... I remember him being cared for, holding him for the first time, changing his diapers, feeding him, all our firsts in the NICU and growing before our eyes...

TODAY...

Luca is thriving as a 5 yearr old, just lost his first tooth, and is in kindergarten! He loves school and his friends! He loves drawing, plays T-ball, and loves going to the movies!





LUKE RAY V.

BORN Sept. 23, 2024 NICU RR

Luke Ray was born at only 24 weeks and spent five months in the hospital. I remember watching Luke gradually get better every day, but there were also many setbacks along the way.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW

Luke is going on two years old now, and when I look at him, I can see just how far he has come. He has surpassed so many of the milestones I prayed and hoped he would reach….



MADISON ALEJANDRA I. G.

BORN April 21, 2026 **NICU RR**

Cuando nacio estaba en NICU 2 meses despues la traladaron en UCLA... entre alegrias y lagrimas sabiamos q Dios estaba con nosotros y los medicos tambien los cuidados de la enfermera ,ella iba seguir adelante a pesar de todo bendito sea Dios q ella esta en casa.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW

Ahora ella come x boca un poco mas. Pasa mas tranquila, le gusta jugar y ase muy seguidos sonido de hablar y se gira ambos lado. Le gusta estar con su familia.



MATEO L.

BORN June 13, 2024 **NICU** Both

43 days. He spent most of the time at Ronald Reagan and later transferred to Santa Monica. I remember every small detail. The heart break, confusion but most of all, I remember the love.

NOW...

Mateo just started his first year of preschool! He is enjoying being a school boy! He is currently receiving speech therapy and he is doing so good in wanting to say more words. He currently into cars!



MATTHEW C.

BORN April 29, 2026 **NICU** RR

43 days, what i remember the most is walking in every day and the first thing asking was “did baby gain weight”.. every gram he gained was a huge milestone and of course how can we forget all the monitors.

TODAY...

Baby is now 4 months old, weighs 13lb 12 oz. You can’t even tell he was preemie, he has chunky cheeks! He likes tummy time and being carried.



MAXWELL JACOB & NOAH ELIAS C.

BORN Jan. 3, 2026 **NICU** RR

Our twins were born at 29 weeks and we were in the NICU for 70 days. What I remember most was the best care that we got from our nurses and primaries.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW...

Our NICU graduates are doing great! They are very happy, giggly and very mobile. They are always smiling and excited to see you. They are crawling, standing, and trying to escape their playpen already.

NATHAN Z.

BORN August 29, 2012 **NICU RR**

Nathan was in the NICU for 4 weeks. What we remember most was how difficult it was waiting for him to be able to eat on his own. After several weeks, they made the decision to place a G-tube... and we were finally able to bring him home. We will always remember how caring and supportive the NICU nurses were...

Today Nathan is 14... a freshman in high school and has come such a long way... he has continued to grow, learn, and enjoy life with such a positive spirit. Nathan loves playing Minecraft and watching ... football especially... the Philadelphia Eagles and enjoys collecting and trading Pokémon cards. He also plays flag football... enjoys swimming and playing pickleball...



PRARIE BELL G.

BORN Aug. 11, 2025 **NICU** RR

Prairie Bell was in the NICU for 7 weeks. It was the most stressful situation ever, but for whatever reason the nurses made me feel at ease every night when I would walk away from her.

NOW...

She's thriving!!! Thankfully we haven't had any set backs, it has been all good things since being discharged, and I thank God every single day for that!





ROMAN

BORN July 14, 2025 NICU RR

Roman is a NEC (Necrotizing enterocolitis) survivor, he was in the NICU 7 months. We had a lot of ups and downs but what we remember the most are wonderful doctors nurses and staff that made our scary journey feel better. We so are grateful to the team of doctors that saved our son's life...

TODAY

Roman's hobbies are playing with his toys, learning to crawl and roll over. He is eating solids and growing every day. Even after his rough start he has a great attitude and the funniest personality.



SARAH S.

BORN July 29, 2006 **NICU** RR

Sarah was born with Spina Bifida and was in the NICU for ten days. I remember one day, Sarah was having a rough day and when we came in to see her the nurse was carrying her around singing to her. That helped put us at ease knowing that when we couldn't be in there with her, she was being taken care of.

TODAY...

Sarah is doing extremely well. She just graduated from college majoring in Liberal Studies. She is a wheelchair dancer and plans on making that her career. Her goal is to show that people in wheelchairs can do what everyone else can do, just a little bit differently.



SERAPHINA M.

BORN Jan. 24, 2020 **NICU** SM

Seraphina was born full term but after we discovered meconium in her water, and some concerning vitals, we discovered she had been suffering from HIE in her final weeks in the womb.

TODAY...

Seraphina is a bright light of a child — she is spunky, energetic, hilarious, and fiercely loving to everyone in her world. She is passionate about animals and wants to be a veterinarian when she grows up.



SOFIA A. S.

BORN Feb. 2, 2021 **NICU** RR

Sofia was in the NICU for 55 days due to a congenital heart disease once she was born. What had us strong was knowing she was in great hands as nurses, Doctors, specialists and cardiologist by her side everyday and doing everything possible for her to go home.

NOW...

Sofia is now currently a strong 5 year old she culminated from Pre-K currently started Kindergarten. She’s very social and the happiest girl ever! She loves playing with her toy babies and loves to play doctor with them.



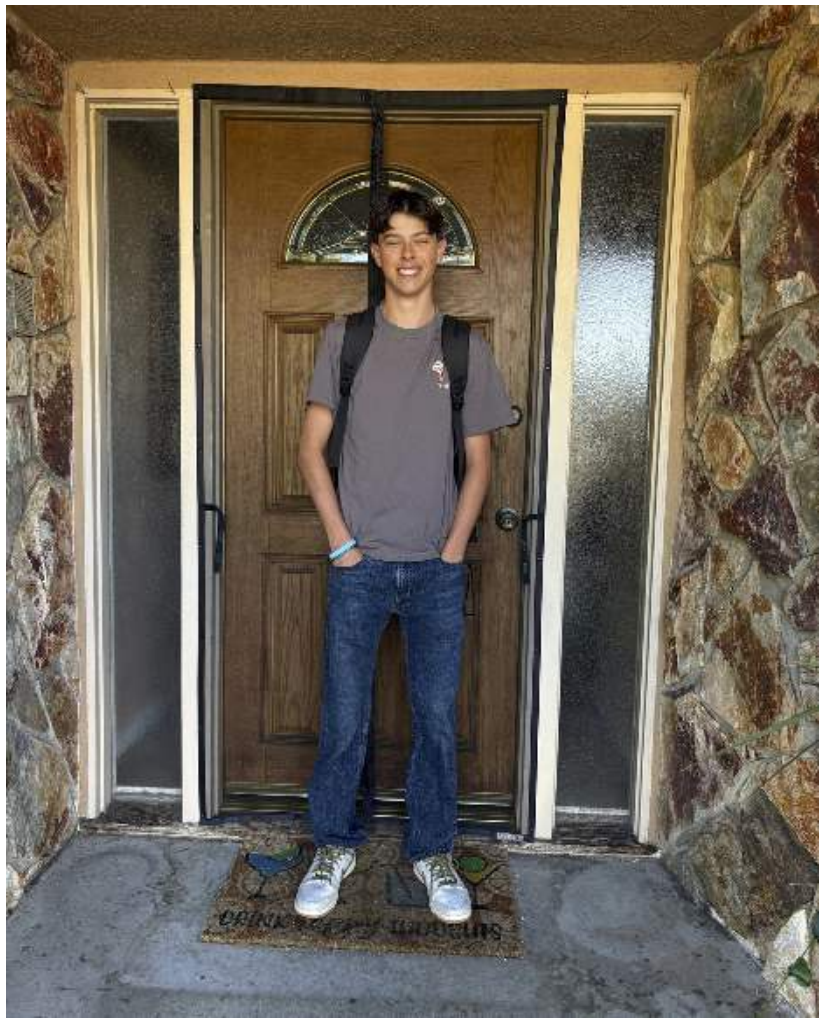
TAK C.

BORN Nov. 12, 2013 **NICU** SM

Tak was born at 34 weeks and spent a month in the NICU.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW...

Tak is now in 7th grade and the tallest in his class. He plays club water polo and recently just competed at the Junior Olympics. He’s a straight A student, and a member of ASB.



TYLER E.

BORN Sept. 9, 2009 **NICU** RR

Tyler remained in the hospital for 10 weeks the first time, only 10 days the second time, and 6 days the third time.

TODAY...

Tyler is a super smart, multi sport athlete who just started his Junior Year in High school. He is looking forward to a great year with friends and driving himself to school!



URIAH D.

BORN Dec. 18, 2013 **NICU** RR

Uriah born on 12-18-2013. He had open heart surgery on the 23rd and we were released on the 31st. He was in the hospital for 13 days.

NOW...

Uriah is a smart 12 year old boy that is highly talented in gymnastics and gave his life to the Lord at 10 years old and professed his faith by getting baptized at 11.

VAYLA ROSE J.

BORN Jan. 25, 2026 **NICU** Both

3.5 weeks how amazing the nurses and staff were. I learned so much about caring for an infant. I also loved how much they loved my baby.

TODAY...

She is doing wonderful. Her favorite thing to do is kick and play with balls. She also loves to talk, she babbles all day long.





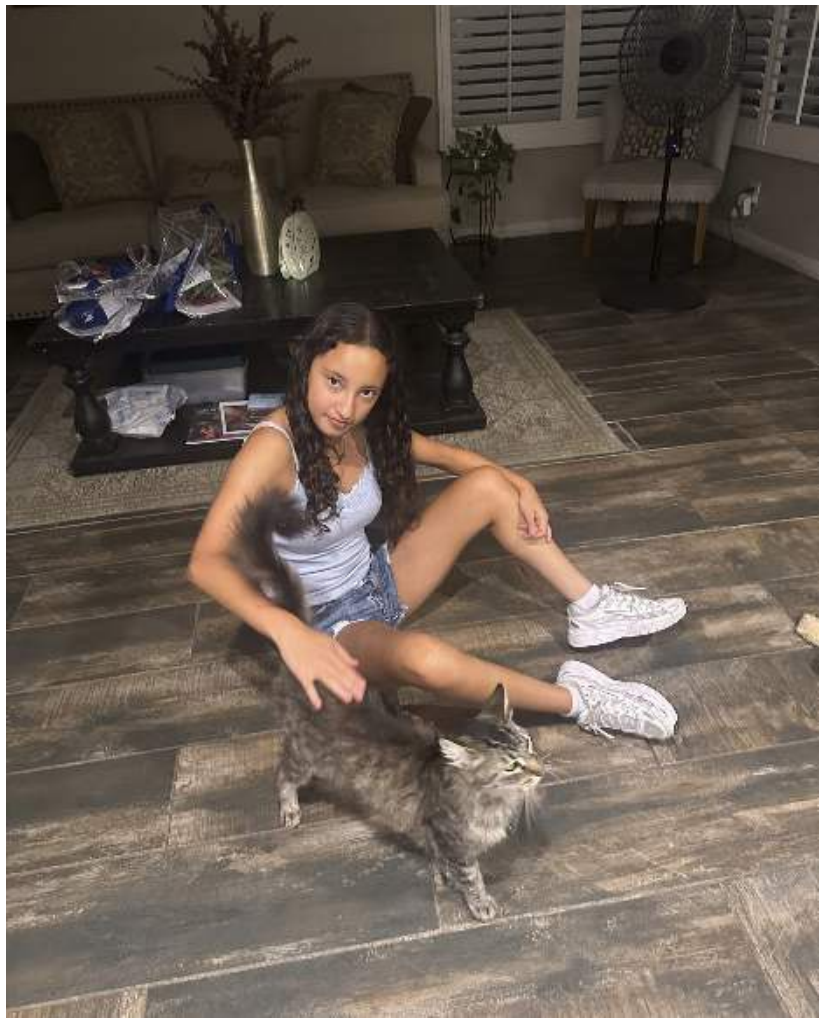
VICTORIA & CARLOS E.

BORN
Victoria: Dec. 22, 2021,
Carlos: July 30, 2023
NICU RR

Victoria born at 23 weeks 4 days, 1.12 oz., 4 month stay. Carlos born 22 weeks 1 day, 1.5 oz., 7 intensive months. I remember every single RN, NP, and Surgeon. Words of encouragement and support, the love and care of every single person from the cleaning crew to the surgeon—my family truly feels blessed and grateful for the Ronald Reagan NICU.

NOW...

Victoria soon to be 5 is in TK. She knows how to write her name, is a leader, and loves to pretend to be a teacher. Carlitos attends preschool, is thriving, and enjoying life.



VIOLET M.

BORN June 3, 2012 **NICU** SM

Violet was in the NICU from June 3, 2012 to August 14, 2012. What I remember most is when I would arrive to the NICU I couldn't wait to see my Violet and hear all the stories of that days happenings.

TODAY...

Violet is now 14 and in 8th grade at a local Catholic school new our home. She will be graduating middle school in June of 2027.



WILLOW LUX C.

BORN Nov. 6, 2013 **NICU** RR

December 2013-March 2014. We remember so much about our NICU stay—the loving care of our nurses, respiratory therapists, support group, and therapists. Our weekly support group became a lifeline for us. It was a soft landing place for the overwhelming emotions that came with the ever-changing course of a NICU journey.

FROM THE NICU TO NOW...

Even though Willow was born at just 22 weeks and 4 days, today she is a healthy, thriving 12-year-old! She has no lingering health issues from her premature birth and has long since been discharged from all of her specialists.



WYATT F.

BORN Feb. 5, 2025 NICU SM

Wyatt was in the NICU for 15 days. I remember being very scared and very worried. But I also remember feeling so grateful for the NICU nurses that were taking care of us. Not having family nearby they became our family.

NOW...

Wyatt is a bubbly, funny, loving little guy. He loves trucks, Elmo, his lion lovey (the same one he had in the NICU), climbing walking and talking! He loves reading books, looking for “cahs” (cars) and airplanes.



ZULMA G.

BORN Nov. 27, 1977 **NICU** RR

My baby spent four months in the NICU. One of the memories that will forever stay with me is seeing her for the very first time. She was so tiny, born at just six months.

TODAY...

She is healthy, strong, and a true fighter. She has grown into an independent, hardworking young woman with a heart of gold.



ZURI N.

BORN Dec. 25, 2022 **NICU** RR

My baby girl was in the NICU almost 6 months, and what I remember most are her amazing nurses that always took time to explain why machines were beeping and why things would play out the way they would.

TODAY...

Zuri is doing amazing, still being followed by Dr. Levi who is great!