

## Two More Little Hill Miracles

Aside from the Hill family's only daughter Abigail, 7, who seems to be the calm among their storms, Benjamin's two brothers, Jonathan, who is nearly 6 and Daniel, 1, have also shared potentially life-threatening situations they managed to overcome.

The most recent involved their youngest child, Daniel, who nearly died during his birth at Eastside Medical Center in June last year. During the delivery, Daniel's body became lodged in the birth canal due to his large size – 11-lbs 5-ozs. His chest was unable to expand leaving him without oxygen and forcing yet another resuscitation crisis.

"They had to run and get two nurses from the NICU. They were the same two nurses who had worked on Benjamin – Sandy Arcand and Libby Heuett, NICU clinical coordinator – and so, it was like – 'Hey Libby! Hey Sandy!'" Martha said.

It was obvious that Sandy was shocked to see Martha in yet another crisis situation, Steve said.

Daniel was maybe four or five minutes without oxygen. "I was thinking after all we had been through with Benjamin could this really be happening with Daniel? I couldn't believe it," Steve said.

In the midst of all the medical drama she has seen, Martha rarely panics. She seems to have a natural ability to remain calm and focused.

"It's nothing that I do consciously," Martha said. "My mind shifts to more of a business mode. I don't dwell on the negative. I can't stand it. So, I probably go way overboard the other direction. I downplay everything, but Steve remembers every detail."

If you were to ask Martha about Daniel's birth the story might be quite different.

"Martha would have said 'all's well that ends well and he's doing great!'" Steve said. "And I would say: Oh, ... it was crazy. Daniel had almost the same low apgar scores as Benjamin. Benjamin was almost dead! He had nothing but a heartbeat. Daniel came out without oxygen – he was blue."



After being labeled at birth by his doctor as a "stillborn with a heartbeat", little Benjamin Hill and mom Martha were elated by his stunning recover.



After suffering near catastrophic health issues with their three sons, all is well with the vacationing Steve and Martha Hill and their children Daniel, 1, Jonathan, 6, bottom left, Benjamin, 3, bottom center, and Abigail, 7.



Martha Hill waits by the beside of her third child, Benjamin, at Emory Eastside Medical Center, as he struggled to recover from a rare blood disorder three years ago.

Their oldest son, Jonathan Hill, fell out of a shopping cart when he was about a year old. While he was getting a bath a day or so later Martha felt a void on his skull as if a section was missing.

“I reached back behind Jonathan’s ear and could not find bone – it was the scariest thing,” Steve said. “The doctor did X-ray, which showed a four-inch linear fracture – nothing too severe.

Jonathan went back for a visit the following week and the doctor gives him a positive report, but Steve wasn’t so sure.

“I was still concerned about what I was feeling, because I can trace the outline of this injury – it was not linear at all; it was semi circular. It felt like a golf divot,” Steve said.

During the next doctor’s visit, once again the report is positive. The doctor explains that swelling is causing the liquid, gushy place Steve is feeling when he checks the area. Steve calls the doctor’s attention to the injury for closer examination and the perimeter of bone that can be traced like a crater on the moon.

“The doctor comes over to do another exam sits down and says I want you to get him an MRI immediately,” Steve said. “At the age of 14 months a child getting an MRI might require sedation and we weren’t excited about this. I asked the doctor: ‘Are you doing this because you are legitimately concerned or because I’m concerned.’

Steve was stunned at the doctor’s response.

“The doctor said: ‘I would have liked to have thought that I could have found this.’ And I was thinking – after three visits; how could have missed it... ?”

Steve contacted his uncle, Thomas J. Boll, Ph.D., who is a neuropsychologist and an expert in closed head injuries.

“He went off his rocker,” Steve said. “He called it a compressed fracture rather than a linear fracture. And he got me pretty scared about what this could mean. We went and quickly had the MRI done and we tried to get it read, but insisted on seeing a pediatric neurosurgeon as my uncle suggested. We had the MRI done on a Friday but could not get in to see the pediatric neurosurgeon until about three weeks after the fall.

The neurosurgeon did a full examination and found nothing wrong. Steve checked Jonathan again and also found nothing wrong.

“It felt like a perfect little head and I felt like an idiot and a happy, happy man,” Steve said. “I couldn’t imagine that it could simply fix itself in three days and truly believe something miraculous had happened.”

Daniel, who will be 1 this month, and Jonathan, who is nearly 6 years old, have since recovered fully.