



Ascension St. Vincent Foundation

Dear Donors,

The hospital can be a scary place for kids and their families. I am lucky enough to serve as a certified Child Life Specialist to some of our newest and most vulnerable patients in the Ascension St. Vincent Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). My job is to bring a sense of normalcy to life in the hospital for both our babies and their families.

Kiran is one of those babies, born just after Thanksgiving in 2019. While prenatal ultrasounds flagged some potential issues, he was born in a much more critical state than anticipated. He spent the first 101 days of his life in the NICU. **Because of support from donors like you, I was able to provide the family with Child Life services that helped them through the darkest times in their lives. And today I'm asking—will you continue to be there for families like Kiran's?**



Kiran, a few days old, in the NICU



Kiran with the Child Life team

With two collapsed lungs at birth and kidney failure, Kiran faced unique challenges that were not easy to overcome. He had many tubes and monitors and remained in his crib for much of the time, unable to be held by his family for weeks.

Kiran was a fighter and so were his parents. I was grateful to be able to support the bonding experience, provide therapeutic tools for the family, and walk alongside Kiran and his family during his stay in the NICU. Throughout their journey we were able to celebrate Kiran's achievements big and small, emotionally supporting Kiran's family, and creating unique, positive memories for the family despite the situation.

The nursing staff and physicians helped Kiran recover and thrive while he, his family and I focused on his emotional and developmental wellbeing. Child Life worked alongside physical and occupational therapy to provide the tools Kiran needed to normalize his environment and work towards developmental goals, such as providing books for language development and bonding; toys to work on fine motor skills; and mobiles, mirrors, and contrasting images to work on visual development. **Support from our donors allow us to purchase items that help families bring normalcy to hospital life that they wouldn't have otherwise.**

Having a baby in the NICU is mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausting. Parents spend most of the days tracking medical events—sometimes good, and sometimes big, heartbreaking setbacks. This focus on the medical side of things—the constant alarms, the next round of checking vitals and talking with physicians—often means celebrating holidays or doing “normal” baby things gets pushed to the back burner.

My goal is to provide relief from hospital life. To help parents and babies have special moments together despite being in an intensive care unit. For Kiran, we created a Valentine’s Day card for his first Valentine’s Day making a heart out of his footprints. This small token of love brought joy and comfort to his family that was much needed.



Kiran and his Dad in the NICU

Child Life can help families cope with the darkest and most challenging time of their life in ways that bring them closer together and provide a framework for caretaking at home. **You can help future patients and their families by returning the enclosed donation card or visiting give.stvincent.org/ChildLife to give online.**



Kiran and his parents today

Kiran was the first patient to be discharged from the NICU at Ascension St. Vincent on dialysis. Today, he is almost 2 years old. Even though he has some big milestones still ahead, including a kidney transplant, he is a happy child and developmentally is doing well. *If you’d like to follow Kiran’s story and learn more about his journey to a new kidney, visit bit.ly/KiransStory.*

My hope and prayer is that future families will get to have a similar experience—one that is a little less scary, a little more manageable, and filled with moments of joy with their little miracle. *Thank you for making that possible* through your donations to Child Life at Ascension St. Vincent.

Thank you for your support,

Morgan Mitchell

Morgan Mitchell
Certified Child Life Specialist, Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
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