

Mercy's Christmas Miracle



**Friends of Mercy
Foundation.**
A Dignity Health Member



Mallaurie and Lance Vermillion of Bakersfield were blessed with two healthy sons.

Wanting to add to their family, the couple endured three losses prior to becoming pregnant with a miracle baby we now know as Blair. In the middle of the second trimester, Mallaurie began experiencing bleeding and was admitted to Mercy Southwest. On Christmas Eve, in spite of efforts by nurses and doctors, Mallaurie went into labor. As the source of the bleeding was unknown, doctors were fearful about performing surgery. "This was the baby girl I had always dreamt about, and I was convinced she was going to die and I may die with her," Mallaurie recalls.

It was in the operating room, during a C-section, that the source of Mallaurie's bleeding was discovered – her uterus had filled with blood clots, causing her and Blair distress.

At 6:38 AM on December 24, 2019, at 25 weeks gestation, weighing 1 pound 9 ounces, Blair Vermillion was born.



The nursing team rushed Blair to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where she was placed on a ventilator. As with other miracle babies, her under developed lungs were struggling. Blair's condition was stable but fragile — anything could happen at any moment. **However, she is a fighter, known by her family as "a warrior."** Setbacks occurred yet Blair's caregivers at Mercy Southwest always had hope for her, and boundless encouragement and support for her parents. Prayer, coupled with the gift of modern medicine and a stellar team of nurses, respiratory therapists, doctors and social workers, Blair was finally on her way to a full realization of health.



As Blair grew stronger, her oxygen levels improved and she was able to feed more and interact with her parents who spent every free moment with her.

Then, outside of the NICU, the unexpected happened... the world was thrown into the midst of a pandemic, COVID-19.

Mercy Hospitals began taking precautions including the difficult decision of limiting visitors to prevent the spread of this newly discovered virus. Mallaurie was able to rest assured that her baby girl was safely in the hands of the NICU nurses at Mercy Southwest. "It's the nurses who are there every single day, every minute of every day watching your baby and making sure that they're okay."





On April 24, 123 days after her birth, Blair was going home! However, Mallaurie knew this meant saying goodbye to nurses she had begun to call family. The bond between the care team at the Mercy Southwest NICU and the parents is indescribable. **Not only had the Vermillions become part of the Mercy family, Mercy had become a part of theirs.**

At home, Blair continues to grow and exceed milestones! Blair will soon be celebrating her first birthday, a day her family prayed would come.

Mallaurie and Lance will never forget the compassion shown to them and their family by the care team at Mercy Southwest Hospital. "We are so overwhelmed with gratitude that we could never, ever explain to them. **They saved our baby's life. They truly did."**



At Mercy Hospitals, our NICU

nurses and doctors are so much more than just caregivers. They are angels, experts, and family. They watch over the babies long after loving parents have returned home. For any parent, having to leave their child in the hospital is unimaginable. **However, new technology that the Foundation is bringing to Mercy Southwest Hospital will allow patients, families and friends to watch over their miracle at all hours of the day with the NICView.**



Each baby in the NICU will have its own, secure live feed so that family will not miss a single moment. With your support, we can give families the comfort of being able to see their baby when they cannot be by their side. With the pandemic, this technology has never been more meaningful.

Please celebrate this season of giving by making a gift to the Friends of Mercy Foundation. A gift will support our efforts to keep our tiniest patients and their families connected at all times.

Regardless of your ability to give, the enclosed prayer card will be forwarded to our local Sisters of Mercy who will pray for your intentions during the Advent season.

May your Christmas Season be filled with abundant health, happiness, peace and kindness.

Sister Judy Morasci

Sister Judy Morasci, RSM,
Vice President of Mission Integration

Tamara Albitre

Tamara Albitre, Director,
Maternal Child Health

Meghan Lansing

Meghan Lansing, Manager,
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Geoff King

Geoff King, Chairman,
Friends of Mercy Foundation



We would like to thank the Vermillion family for allowing us to journey alongside of them, and now by so generously allowing us to share their story. **This act of kindness will help us bring comfort to our NICU families, now and for generations to come.**

Please be assured that 100% of your generous gift will support the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Mercy Hospital Southwest, and the continuing mission of the Sisters of Mercy, founding congregation of Mercy Hospitals Bakersfield. The Friends of Mercy Foundation proudly raises and administers funds that support the healthcare facilities and outreach efforts of Mercy Hospitals.

The Friends of Mercy Foundation respects your privacy. If you prefer to not receive any further communications from us, please send a brief note with your name and address.

Online giving available at:
www.SupportFriendsOfMercy.org

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