

AMAZING CARE LETS *Little Dominic* LIVE THE **BIG** LIFE

Amy and Nick Williams experienced firsthand a hidden world most parents never see. They lived every step of their baby's development from his ultra-critical 1-pound, 3-ounce beginning to the spitfire two-year-old boy they nicknamed The Dominator who illuminates their lives today.

An amazingly positive attitude guided Amy and Nick of Hartland, owners of Twist 'n Olive in Delafield (Nick also serves as a system security administrator for ProHealth Care), as they watched Dominic experience steps in his development most take for granted: opening his eyes, swallowing, turning his head, crying, breathing on his own and sensing hunger.

TROUBLE SURFACED EARLY ON

Dominic wasn't the only one who overcame challenges surrounding his birth. At age 30, after a couple miscarriages, Amy was thrilled to be pregnant. But things became worrisome as early as 13 weeks. Tests revealed fears of spina bifida and Down syndrome, and led to an amniocentesis at 21 weeks.

"The genetic counselor from ProHealth Care told me 'it's a boy,'" said Amy. "We were so surprised because we had been told it was a girl! But further imaging showed that our baby's development was stressed due to an unknown cause at the time." By the 24th week, the trend continued.

Under the care of Kathy Hartke, M.D. obstetrics/ gynecology, Amy was monitoring her blood pressure three times a day. She also collected urine every 24 hours to look for protein, indicating her kidneys were shutting down.

CRITICAL-CARE TREATMENT SAVES MOM AND BABY

At 25 weeks, Amy was admitted to Waukesha Memorial Hospital for bed rest and continued monitoring by a team of ProHealth Care's Women's Center physicians collaborating on her care. Fourteen hours after her arrival, Randall Kuhlmann, M.D. diagnosed Amy with placental abruption, where the placental lining separates from the uterus — affecting just 1 percent of pregnancies worldwide. Amy's life, as well as Dominic's, was in danger.



"I went from mild to severe overnight. I credit Dr. Hartke for saving Dominic's life, as well as mine," says Amy. "If she wasn't so prudent and thorough, I wouldn't be here today." After delivery, Amy spent six days in the hospital because her liver and kidneys were shutting down. It took 12 hours for her to be stable enough to even see Dominic. "The staff was phenomenal though," says Amy. "They gave me continuous updates on his progress."

A FIGHTER FROM DAY ONE

Dominic was born on November 17, 2006, at Waukesha Memorial Hospital as a micro-preemie, a mere 12 inches long — with an 11 percent chance of survival. Thus began the first of 91 days in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

with a team of caregivers who treated Dominic like one of their own. "This was the best place Dominic could be," says Amy. "The doctors and nurses gave him excellent care, working together beautifully. They're so special and unique, and treat all babies as miracles."

Amy says Dominic looked like a normal baby at birth, just much smaller, with fingernails and a full head of hair. Breathing was Dominic's biggest challenge in the months of struggles that lie ahead. He also endured several surgeries, including heart surgery, which was

performed in the NICU because he was too fragile to transfer.

"Dominic's skin was transparent, sticky and so fragile," shares Amy. "I couldn't cradle him in my arms for a couple of months or see his beautiful face without tubes until six months. He was such a fighter and so determined. We think this helped him survive."

Today at age two, Dominic has no cognitive delays, he's almost caught up in size, eating like a horse, running around the house at full speed — and not looking back.