

EXTRACT FROM EMAIL RECEIVED VIA PARENT CHAT ON 2 DECEMBER 2008

Hello Lavonne

Thank you for your email – brought tears to my eyes again.

Your efforts not only spared me pain. It spared my sanity, my emotional wellbeing – my life. During those times when my baba was still in ICU, it was your organization that allowed me the first step towards understanding the world I had suddenly become part of. From reading about the machines in NICU, what to expect etc to realizing that I was not alone. Funny hey, I am sure people would be so surprised to learn that before having Karabo, I had heard before of premature babies but I actually did not understand what it was. I had no idea any baby can be born so many weeks before due date.

To be honest with you, I remember there was a day when I thought that this only happens to white people (you see how stupid I had become – so naïve!) because I had not known anyone from my family or friends who had had a baby this early. But then, only later did people start telling me about people they knew who gave birth early and in my own family, one of my cousins gave birth at 29 weeks too (20 years ago) but no one ever talked about it. I also found out that my mom's sister had a "blue baby" who lived in a bottle (incubator). I was supposed to be this intelligent young woman but I suddenly I became so stupid making all sorts of stupid assumptions.

About the name of the hospital – yes, I agree, remove it. It was just anger – and I have seen that feeling so angry does not allow me to move on but keeps me in the past. I have also realized that sometimes, people just don't understand and simply need to be educated. So instead of feeling angry – I would rather be an advocate for moms who have small babies like I did. I would rather offer support, empathy and companionship to those who need it. I was recently told by one of the nurses at the hospital that there is a support group that will be formed for moms at their hospital with prem bambinos. They thought of me and wanted to find out if maybe I would be interested in helping out when this starts up and I agreed. I also told them of the P4A and the support I have received. I am thinking that instead of fighting, I would like to go to them and with your help maybe form some form of support program as it does not exist there.

So in a nutshell, thank you. I cannot thank you enough though – I don't even have words to tell you how grateful I am to you. I will never forget the day I called your offices for the first time. What started as a doubtful call ended up saving my life and led me to a new beginning with my baby.

You saved me.

Kind Regards

Naniki Mkhawane