

Weekly Highlight

18/11/2021

When They Come Early – Our Premie Babies

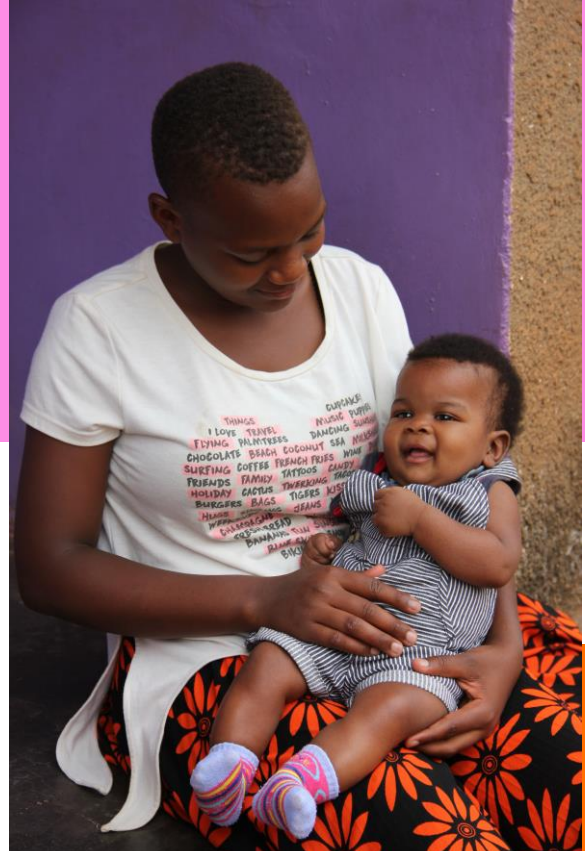
As we complete the year, we have been taking stock of what the year has been like, what we have achieved and what remains to be done. As we went through these reviews, I was overwhelmed at the amount of activity our staff actually get done, even in a year like this that has been fraught with challenges – the least of which has been the COVID19 pandemic, and the greatest, financial resources!

As the Health Team presented their report for the 10 months, I was, especially struck by the numbers of premature babies born. Out of 80 babies born to teen moms aged 14 and 16 years, 8 were premature babies weighing between 3.5 to 4.5 pounds (about 11% of all the babies born). And here's what we know about teen moms and premature babies;

- Teen mothers are more likely than mothers over age 20 to give birth prematurely (before 38 completed weeks of pregnancy).
- Babies born prematurely face an increased risk of new born health problems, long-term disabilities and even death.
- Babies who are premature and have low birthweight may have organs that are not fully developed. This can lead to breathing problems, such as respiratory distress syndrome, bleeding in the brain, vision loss and serious intestinal problems

This was our experience this year: Two (2) of these premature babies have been diagnosed with PDA, or what we lay people call, “a hole in the heart”; four (4) of them have suffered respiratory distress syndrome necessitating us to run to hospital at odd hours of the night - in the middle of a 7pm to 6am curfew. We lost two (2) babies to respiratory distress.

God Is Rewriting Stories and You Are Part Of It! Thank You For Your Generosity





Meet Baby Joy



We received Brenda a 14-year-old teen mom through the Lubaga Hospital teen safe space. She was defiled by a neighbour who kidnapped, abused and abandoned her in an unfinished building in their neighbourhood. He threatened to harm her should she reveal what had happened to her. Brenda was in shock and did not tell her Auntie whom she lived with what had happened to her, afraid that the perpetrator would kill her as he had warned. What she did not know was that she had conceived as a result of this incident, and of course, one cannot hide a pregnancy forever. When our team was called to support her, Brenda was weeping painfully; she was depressed and was struggling to accept that she was

pregnant. She refused to eat as an attempt to end her life. Brenda needed counselling and mental health support. Even though the perpetrator was imprisoned and her case is being pursued, Brenda's life was being threatened. She needed a place where she could feel safe, protected and loved.

After a series of counselling sessions and specialized care for Brenda, she accepted her baby and even began to look forward to holding him in her arms. She had her antenatal care reviews until she was 35 weeks along, when she got preterm labour pains. On October 13th, Brenda underwent an emergency caesarean section and gave birth to a baby boy – she named him “Joy”. At birth, Joy was in foetal distress. Joy was asphyxiated with a very oxygen score of 4/10 and weighed 2.6kgs (5.7lbs). He was rushed to the neonatal unit in a critical condition where he spent 4 days. They were later discharged in a fairly good condition.

One week later, however, Joy's condition worsened and he was readmitted because he was still having difficulty breathing. After 3 days of close monitoring and regular tests, results indicated that the baby's heart had a small PDA. According to the cardiologist, this should close by the time he makes 3 months, but we were advised that if it fails to close then surgical measures will be taken.

Brenda is grateful as she testifies to TRG that it could have been a life lost if TRG did not intervene. The teen mom says *“I am forever grateful that The Remnant Generation saved my baby and I.”* Brenda is a strong girl and she loves her baby very much. Baby Joy is still in hospital. It costs about \$57 per day for the medications, special tests, and general facilitation for our nurse and teen mom while in hospital. Join us in believing for complete healing.



Meet Suubi

Sophia a 14-year-old teen mom was referred to TRG by another organization. She was impregnated by her boyfriend who used to buy her gifts and give her grandmother money to help buy food at home. Sophia did not know she was pregnant until she went back to school where one of the teachers noticed that she was pregnant. During one of our medical outreaches, where we provide free ultrasound scan services, it was noticed that the baby's cord was wrapped tightly around its neck and baby movement had declined greatly. She was immediately taken in for an emergency C-section, and on 8th September 2021, Sophia gave birth to a baby girl weighing 2.6kgs. She named her Suubi. After about 11 days in hospital, both mother and baby were discharged in good general condition and have not had any other incident since.

All these come with unplanned and extra financial obligations that cannot be ignored. These precious babies need a “special” of everything – formula, diapers, clothes, quality of bedsheets, equipment, hygiene, separate special room with limited access. We have made many adjustments within the Princess Shelters to make sure that there is no exposure to infections. We have been blessed to see how girls are helping each other to cope. Our house mothers and nurses are working 24/7 shifts to provide support to the young moms as they care for their little ones. There is so much detail that goes into nurturing preemie babies. Our general monthly health budget has doubled.

I think about the numbers of teen moms that do not have access to a facility like The Princess Shelter. I think about the teen moms who have no financial support to pay for these costly health care services. I think about the young moms who have to walk this journey alone without a loving adult helping them to be brave! My heart breaks to imagine the numbers of babies that do not make it. I imagine the long lonely nights when they need to run to hospital and there is no vehicle, ambulance or even a phone to call for help. These are the realities of hundreds of teen moms in our country. **This is why we must continue to serve!**

I am extremely grateful - for our major health partners that are investing in saving lives! Because of your generosity, our young moms are able to receive timely and professional health care that has enabled quick diagnosis and management of these health complications.

