

A Light in the Darkness

When Jacki Caudill was suddenly diagnosed with a dangerous and life-threatening condition known as pre-eclampsia, doctors knew they had to act fast. At just 28 weeks pregnant, the risk associated with premature birth meant that her child's best chance for survival would be at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health in Indianapolis. Scared and confused, Jacki was life-lined from St. Francis Hospital in Greenwood, IN, to IU Health University Hospital for an emergency caesarean section delivery.



On February 20, 2012, Jacki and her husband, Aaron, welcomed their baby girl weighing less than 2lbs, and only just 12" in length. Her arrival was so unexpected that the Caudills had yet to even decide on a name for her. "The days to follow all became a blur, but **the one thing I knew for certain was that I was not leaving her side,**" says Jacki.

After five days of hospitalization, Jacki and Aaron feared the thought of being discharged and separated from their daughter. They requested a room at the Ronald McDonald House. To their delight, they were able to secure a room at the House at Riley their first two nights and were able to gain a long-term

room at the Limestone House after that. "My heart was filled with joy and I cried tears of happiness. I knew that this would be a very long road, but being close by made it hurt a little less," says Jacki.

The Caudill family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House for over two months and were thankful to be by their daughter's side for every milestone she passed. Jacki and Aaron were especially grateful for the supporters of the Ronald McDonald House who made it possible for them to stay – from those that made donations to those that came in to serve a homemade meal. **"It made my heart happy to still feel loved and cared about during a time that felt so dark and lonely,"** says Jackie.

Today, the Caudills are happy to report that at four-years-old, LilyAnn Oleisa (meaning God's promise to you), is healthy as can be. She attends pre-school and loves gymnastics, swimming, baking and riding her dirt bike. True to her name, she is the tallest of her class and continues to pass all screenings and developmental milestones with flying colors. LilyAnn also recently became a proud big sister to her baby brother, Jaxon, who was born full-term in September of 2014. Looking back, Jacki says their journey has given her a deeper appreciation for the fragility of life and she's learned to never give up hope, to stay strong for your children and to never take a moment for granted.

