

Stephanie Poss watched her son Beckham endure months of hospitalization as experts tried to figure out what caused his seizures and inability to digest

“I could not hold Beckham much for the first month; I played “Who Am I” on repeat. When the song was on, his heartbeat would regulate. To this day he will stop crying when that song plays.”

- Stephanie Poss



Steven Poss, holding Beckham, with Taylor High School Mission POSSible supporters

# The Adventures of Baby Beckham

## Katyites Steven and Stephanie Poss' premature son Beckham faces a life-threatening "medical mystery" and survives

Written by Stephanie Poss | Select photography by Kristen Richards

It's been said, "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have." The greatest news in the world was that our family of three would be growing to a family of four. Beckham Neil Poss was due to arrive in mid-October 2013. As any expecting parents, my husband Steven and I could not be happier. We immediately started preparing his room and our daughter for the change of not being an only child anymore. During pregnancy, I threw up so much I ended up on complete bed rest. I went into preterm labor in early August, and we began shots to help build his lungs and trying to stop the labor. On August 24 Beckham arrived, weighing just over five pounds.

Beckham was quickly rushed to the NICU. When a child is born, you want to hold and cuddle them, but a NICU mom can't. Each day he improved. As parents, we lived for the few times we got to hold Beckham. We struggled to not feel helpless. One month after being born, he was released to go home. He was strong enough, or so we thought.

### The Longest Days

I have never felt more ill-prepared than when I took Beckham home for the first time. Something in my heart kept telling me he was not ready, but I tried to silence that voice because the doctors believed he was. On October 1, 2013, I woke up excited to celebrate my birthday and found out it would be the toughest day of my life. I was holding Beckham as he was sleeping and noticed a strange violent movement. It was like nothing I had seen before.

I called the doctor's office, trying not to sound crazy. As I was on the phone, Beckham went into a seizure again and stopped breathing. The nurse dispatched 911 to my house and walked me through how to help him. All I could do was try to follow her directions and pray God would take over. After many tests at Texas Children's West Campus, it was decided Beckham needed more intense treatment at Texas

Children's in the Medical Center in the Level II NICU. My husband and I had no answers. The doctors did not know what was wrong. All we were told is he was a "medical mystery." I have always been a Christ follower, but I never knew what it meant to truly trust the Lord with my whole heart until He was truly the only thing keeping my son alive. There in the NICU, we begged God to save him.

In the depths of our despair, we clung to the miracles that began to unfold. A sorority sister I had not seen in close to 10 years showed up and had a blanket made for Beckham that was blessed at a church. This became the one thing that never left his side. This same friend was able to help get us into the Ronald McDonald House so we could stay close by.

### Katy Support

As the days in the hospital turned into months, we saw an outpouring of support. Taylor High School students had a fundraising week. They had meals, made shirts, had dodgeball tournaments - you name it, they did it for us. They raised over \$8,000 to help us with our bills. Taylor and our church, Parkway Fellowship, set up a meal calendar providing dinners from October through January. The Houston Aces soccer team dedicated their preseason to Beckham. The Joe Joe Bear Foundation brought Beckham and Brooklyn gifts. Musician Justin Michael Bell did a benefit show. Friends and family cleaned our home.

### Waiting for Answers

My sister-in-law had a great idea to set up a Facebook page so we could update it, and then all of our friends and family could see what was going on without us having to talk about the details repeatedly. She also set up a medical fundraising page and gifts started to pour in for our little warrior. As bills were mounting, and all of our resources were depleting, my husband and I prayed about what to do next.

Stephanie and Steven Poss with their children Beckham and Brooklyn



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We still were no closer to any answers. The best minds in medicine could not figure him out. All we had been given was a medical label of "failure to thrive" - a label the doctors gave him, but we would not allow them to speak in Beckham's room. Yet my husband and I both felt a peace that can only come from our heavenly Father. We were reassured Beckham was going to live.

In November, Beckham was released to come home with a feeding tube and a home health nurse. The thought of having medical staff in my home was horrible, but I tried to remember that it would be better than not having him home. The next day we met Tara, Beckham's home health nurse, one of the angels who touched our lives. Tara was a member of the family from the first moment we met her. She taught my daughter how to turn the feeding tube on and off and how to use the stethoscope.

Beckham was on specialized formula because he could not digest. Once we were out of the hospital, our insurance denied this. Our formula bills were almost as much as our mortgage. We were struggling. Steven and I began to sell items, give private coaching lessons, anything we could do. In December, Beckham got the flu and was hospitalized again. The staff at the Texas Children's West Campus became friends. We got to come home and then he was sick again and was hospitalized until two days before Christmas.

### Friends and Miracles

As parents, you worry not only about the health of your children, but also their happiness. With all funds depleted and no end in sight, we were burdened with not making our mortgage and celebrating Christmas. Again, God reminded us to "be still and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10). The next day Brian Bruenke, one of our pastors told me they felt led to pay our mortgage. Our spirits were renewed. God was keeping us going. A group of friends from Taylor High School brought gifts for my children.

I had to quit my position as a teacher at Taylor High School. In an amazing turn of events, Dagley Insurance and Marcus Henneke offered me a position which allowed me to work from the hospital. With Beckham still needing home health, we wanted to get back to normal. Katie Collins, a previous student of mine, just happened to be working at my daughter's day care at the time. She became Beckham's nannie so I could work full-time.

We were told Beckham would have to be on a feeding tube for at least a year. If he was ever strong enough to be off it he would need a massive amount of therapy. By April, only six months after being on the feeding tube, Beckham began to have oral feedings. A few months later he was tube free. Today, weighing 23 hard-earned pounds, Beckham is completely caught up to his peers! A true miracle. **KM**

*EDITORS NOTE: Katy Magazine would like to thank the Poss family for sharing their amazing story of hope and faith with the community.*

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