

Welcome Home

The Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc.

FALL 2011

Ross Family

We are from Tazewell, Virginia, which is about 2 hours from Johnson City. My name is Shawn, I work at Tazewell Elementary School in Tazewell County, and my wife Michelle, is a stay-at-home Mom. We have a 20-month-old son Robert and an 8-month-old son Callen. We spent the beginning of 2011 in Johnson City, and Robert stayed in Florida with his grandparents, and extended family, except for the weekends he was able to come spend with us at the Ronald McDonald House.

On January 25, 2011, Michelle had complications during her pregnancy and had to be airlifted to Johnson City Medical Center. We went to Johnson City in the hopes of delaying the labor, but Callen did not agree. He was born at 7:13pm that night, via an emergency C-section, just as I was hurried into the delivery room. He weighed 1 pound and 10 ounces and was 12 and ½ inches long, he is considered a micro-preemie, because he was born at 24 weeks gestation, 4 months premature. We were able to see him briefly and hear him try to cry before he was rushed to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. It was 5 hours before we were able to see him again. When we saw him, he was in an isolette, which was mimicking the temperature and moisture of the womb. He was also on a ventilator and being given fluids through an IV.

One day we were in the NICU and one of the nurses asked us what our plans were and we said we wanted to stay



as close to Callen as possible, but had not thought much past the four days Michelle was going to be in the hospital

recovering. The Nurse said no worries, just fill out this form and we will take care of the rest. We did and the nurses faxed everything over and got us signed up to stay at the Ronald McDonald House.

We checked in on January 29, which was Robert's 1st birthday. We were in the house for over 100 days. Callen has had a rough road and there was always something new every day. He had surgery to close a hole in his heart. He had a collapsed lung because of the heart surgery, which required a chest tube to be surgically inserted in order to re-inflate his lung. He had numerous infections such as, MRSA, which means he had to be in isolation room, pneumonia, flu, a water bug in his lungs, e-coli and a urinary tract infection. He battled everyday with breathing and was on several types of ventilators that did the breathing for him. He started on a conventional vent, next was on an oscillating vent and then a high power Jet vent. For a while, he was going back and forth between a Si-Pap machine and conventional vent.

His vent tube came out three times and they had to re-insert it because without it he would not have been able to breathe on his own. In the beginning, he was getting all of his nutrition through an IV, then he was getting his fluid through IV and a feeding tube gave him breast milk. For a long time he was fighting immature lungs, renal failure, and liver issues



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