

What a wonderful legacy

How can we ever adequately say “thank you” to someone who has contributed more than she’ll ever know to the strength and direction of the Royal Hospital for Women Foundation (the Foundation), not to mention the lives and well being of the hospital’s patients.

It’s been 12 wonderful years since Jacqueline Samuels’ first association with the Foundation as Patron in 1997, then Director of the Board in 2001 and culminating as President in 2003. During this time, her support of the Foundation has been phenomenal and, for many, it’s been an absolute privilege and honour to work along side her.

Sadly for us, in June this year Jacqueline retired from the Board, but what a well-earned retirement it is. “During Jacqueline’s time at the Foundation, her commitment was exceptional and she had tremendous compassion and understanding to the needs of the RHW,” commented Penelope Hess, the Foundation’s Chief Executive.

Jacqueline, we will miss your warm and friendly face, your tireless dedication to the cause of the Foundation and most of all, your loyal friendship. From the bottom of our hearts, we do indeed sincerely thank you.



cover story continued

more than likely to be movement on her right side”, says Elinya. Lucy will be given preventative physiotherapy, “but we won’t know until she’s a bit older” Elinya says. In the journey of a premature baby, fear of the unknown is the greatest fear of all.

As a parent, you have to take one day at a time. The Royal makes this so much easier because of the NCC’s wonderful doctors and nurses. “The level of care is fantastic, we couldn’t be in a better place”, comments Elinya. “They all do such a fantastic job for the babies, and in providing emotional support for the parents”.

And what an emotional journey it is! There are many ups and downs, every day. “The staff know when you’ve had a bad day or when you get some bad news”, says Elinya. They’ve perfected that delicate balance of knowing when to step in and when a little space is needed. “They know what to say and they know when to step back”, Elinya adds.

Happily, Lucy went home with her Mum and Dad on 14 October weighing 3.28kgs. What an exciting day that was. “We can see the light now,” says Elinya. “She’s now 3.5kgs, leaping forward and enjoying her breast feeds.” Despite efforts to get her breathing alone, Lucy went home on oxygen and may need it for another year. Life with a baby on an oxygen monitor at home takes some getting used to, but it’s definitely worth it. “I love spending time with Lucy and being able to be there and comfort her every time she needs it,” says Elinya.

Not surprisingly, Elinya and Joe will miss the interaction with the doctors and nurses. “Being able to talk to the nurses every day, even if it wasn’t about medical things was great” says Elinya, not to mention the on-hand lactation advice, especially for a first time Mum!

The journey of a premature baby isn’t for the faint hearted but it’s one that builds an inner strength you could never imagine possible. “The way these babies cling to life and pull through is amazing and it really prioritises things for you”, comments Elinya. Those day-to-day issues that once caused worry just don’t seem so important now.

For Lucy and her parents, the road has just begun, but it’s a road whose outlook is so much brighter than it was in those first frightening days. Apart from Lucy’s incredible will to survive, it’s thanks to the fantastic and constant care of the NCC’s doctors and nurses. Without their dedication and skill, many babies like Lucy would have little or no hope of survival.

If you think Lucy’s had her last visit to the NCC, you’re definitely mistaken. She’ll join many NCC graduates who visit to say thanks and show the staff what a wonderful gift of life that they and their parents have been given. Lucy, Elinya and Joe, we really look forward to your return visits in the years to come!