

Stephanies' story (Nicholas' birth 4/7/07) *First time mom home birth.*

## **Birth Story**

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007



Although I did not know this at the time, a two hour massage followed by some super spicy Thai food was just what I needed to send me into labor. I remember laying my head on my pillow and going to bed on Friday April 6<sup>th</sup> (the day before my due date) thinking about what Saturday would bring. At the time my husband (Teo) was working at Whole Foods and his shift on Saturday was from one in the morning until seven am. I remember briefly waking up as he was getting ready to leave and feeling fine. Several hours later I woke to some light contractions and came to realize that I was indeed in labor. I rolled over to call Teo up and give him a heads up and his phone rang right by the beside. What a day to forget your phone I thought! So, I went downstairs and grabbed the phonebook, looked up Whole Foods phone number, and hoped that someone would answer the phone. After being transferred several times to different sleepy and disgruntled voices, I finally got Teo on the phone and told him that I was in the beginning stages of labor (and I think that I might have gently mentioned that his phone was still lying by the beside). I next called our friend, Jesse, who was going to be at our birth. Shortly after our conversation she came over to our house. Next phone call was to Deirdre who had just arrived back in the States after a few weeks away with Alan. I welcomed her back and jokingly told her that we were just waiting for her to get back to have the baby!

As the sun rose the birth “team” gathered at our home on Munjoy Hill. Around seven in the morning Deirdre came over and we checked to see how far along I was. I was only a few centimeters dilated, so she encouraged us to go and take a walk around the neighborhood and she would check back with us in a few hours. Before heading out, Teo began the process of filling up the birth tub that we had ordered. Everything was going fine until we ran out of hot water (something that we had not thought about). So, while I was timing my contractions with Jesse upstairs, Teo was filling the lobster pot to generate more hot water. About an hour later we put on jackets, hats, and leashed up the dog to take a walk around the neighborhood. I have to say that it was one of the most challenging walks of my life; having to stop every few steps to brace myself for a contraction. I imagine that I got several strange looks from the neighbors as I stopped to hold on to a parked car or to Teo. One of the best parts of the walk was running into our mailman, Walter (father of four), across the street. As he yelled, “ Steph, are you in labor.....you look like it?” I simply gave a nod and he wished me his best (two days later he was by with books for the newest addition to the Doyle family).

When we returned from the walk it was clear that things were getting a bit more intense. The contraction were coming at a quicker pace and feeling a lot stronger. Sometime in the early afternoon Deirdre came back over and we checked to see that I

was progressing along fine, but still had a ways to go. Deirdre suggest that this might be a good time to get into the tub, so Teo and I went upstairs and I labored in the tub for a while. Although the contractions were still rather strong, the warm water was really soothing and kind of turned my attention away from the intensity of the experience. One thing that I remember rather clearly was thinking how lucky I was to be in the comfort of my home and hear the familiar voices of Jesse and Deirdre laughing and having lunch in the kitchen, and Teo's reassuring voice echoing in my ears.

As the sun began to set it was clear that we were getting closer to the birth. I was feeling like I needed more grounding so I opted to get out of the tub. The team was all gathered in our bedroom and Robin had arrived, which was an indication that we were indeed getting closer. About an hour after some really strong contractions, we had a conversation about my water not breaking. I remember Deirdre saying that she could break my water for me, but to be aware that the contractions would get strong after that. I was thinking...holy shit....stronger than this. After thinking about that for a few moments, we decided to go ahead and break my water. The contraction following the breaking of the water was difficult, but I knew that with the difficulty we were getting closer.

On my hands and knees I began to push. I don't really remember this part as well, but I do recall telling Deirdre that I felt something coming out. I think that she did not think that the baby was coming, because the next thing I remember the baby's head was coming out and she was asking for someone to pass her some gloves. Within moments I heard a faint cry and my baby boy was handed to me as I leaned back against my bed. I felt completely exhausted and elated at the same time. The next hour or so is a blur. I remember breast feeding almost immediately and taking some time to situate myself. There was some conversation about if I needed a few stitches, which we opted not to do. After Deirdre and Robin checked out the two of us, we all made our way downstairs for some homemade macaroni and cheese. A few hours later after I had a chance to shower and we seemed to be situated, Deirdre and Robin left for the evening. Teo, Jesse, and I went back upstairs and had a few good laughs before Teo, myself, and the baby settled into bed for our first night together. Three days later....Nicholas (Nico) Doyle was named and settling into his new life.