

Quantum House aids families with newborns in neonatal care

Your Turn

Lauren Stoops
Guest columnist

Not many people may know that September is NICU Awareness Month, a time to recognize the dedication of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit medical teams and highlight the strength of families with premature or critically ill newborns. This month serves to raise awareness about the realities of NICU life and community resources that support families.

For me, this cause is personal. In 2019, my first son was born at 34 weeks and spent three weeks in the NICU at St. Mary's Medical Center. Like many new parents, my husband and I were adjusting to the unexpected while learning how to care for our baby in a medical setting. Quantum House, located right next door to the hospital, became a place where we could regroup, rest and focus on our son's care without added logistical or financial stress.

I had always thought of Quantum House as a place for families traveling from out of town. Experiencing it firsthand as a local family gave me a new perspective. The House opens its doors to anyone whose child is receiving treatment at any Palm Beach County Hospital, offering more than a place to stay, it offers a community of support.

Today, I serve on the board of Quantum House, and I've seen how much environment matters to families undergoing the kind of stress our family faced. Volunteers prepare meals so families can focus on their children instead of grocery lists. There are two large kitchens, two playrooms, a gaming room and even a putting green.

Thanks to community partners, there's often an activity happening: therapy dog visits, ice cream trucks, art projects and holiday celebrations that bring a sense of normalcy during a stressful time.

NICU Awareness Month is about recognizing the tangible impact of these moments of connection and comfort. Connecting with another parent who understands, a shared meal or a short walk instead of a long commute can all help families conserve the energy they need for their child.

Quantum House's mission is simple but powerful: to be a "home away from home" for families facing a



Lauren Stoops and family. PROVIDED BY LAUREN STOOPS

medical crisis. For me, it has been a place that turned an overwhelming time into one grounded in support. This is why I continue to volunteer and advocate for its work.

This month is an opportunity for our community to learn more about what NICU families experience and the resources available to them. Supporting Quantum House, whether by volunteering, partnering on programs, or simply spreading the word, helps ensure that families can focus on what matters most: being there for their children.

Lauren Stoops is a Quantum House board member. She lives in West Palm Beach.