

McChord couple overcomes adversity

by Master Sgt. Bud McKay

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. — Reserve Senior Airman **Chris Murphy** was just another dad in the hospital operating room waiting to see the birth of his daughter. That is until doctors told him he had to leave so they could start the fight to save his wife's life.

Ignoring the medical advice of doctors and wishes of her family and friends, Reserve Staff Sgt. **Becky Murphy**, who was diagnosed with aggressive cervical cancer three months into her pregnancy, put off the fight to save her own life so she could attempt to give life to her baby, **Katie**.

Doctors strongly suggested Becky have an immediate abortion along with a complete hysterectomy so she could start chemotherapy. She was given an 85 percent chance of surviving if doctors acted when the cancer was first discovered. She only had a 45 percent chance of surviving for three to five years if she went through 34 weeks of pregnancy and then had a hysterectomy.

"My wife wanted a baby, but having a baby meant I was going to lose my wife," Chris said. "For my wife to have a chance to survive meant we had to lose the baby. It was the most unfair thing I could ever think of."

Thirty-four weeks into the pregnancy, doctors delivered 5-pound, 5-ounce Katie by Caesarean then immediately performed a four-hour hysterectomy operation on Becky.



After carefully weighing the advice of medical professionals, Becky Murphy (far right) went through 34 weeks of pregnancy with aggressive cervical cancer despite a 45 percent chance of surviving in order to give birth to her daughter. Becky's prognosis is good, and it appears all her cancer is gone. The Murphy family includes (left to right) Tyler, Chris, Christopher Jr., Katie and Becky.

Katie was 17 inches long, and she was immediately taken to the neonatal intensive care unit and put on a ventilator to help her fragile lungs function properly. The next day, Katie's lungs collapsed.

"I thought she was going to die," said Becky, who still had to worry about her life with cancer.

Five days later, Katie's little hand yanked the ventilator tube out from her chest, and she began breathing on her own. Now almost 7 months old, doctors said Katie will be fine. So will Becky,

whose oncologist said it looked like all the cancer was gone.

"The tests showed the cancer was all in the cervix," Becky said. "They got it all."

The oncologist couldn't explain why the cancer didn't spread like he thought it would. After telling the new mother, "I guess I was wrong, and you were right," Becky replied, "You're damn skippy I was right."

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