

20<sup>th</sup> International Conference on**NEONATOLOGY AND PERINATOLOGY**

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**From preemie to young adult: A retrospective look at parenting over a twenty-six year period****Laura Miller**

March of Dimes Foundation, USA

**H**ave you ever thought to yourself, “I wonder what happened to that family, once they left the neonatal intensive care unit? How did the family cope, or how did the infant progress, once they got home?” Every year, thousands of infants and their parents and families spend days, weeks or months in a hospital unit, but once they transition to home, we often lose track of them. Through pictures and stories, Laura will share her personal journey, a long-range view of her life, and of her 27-week twin sons, after their NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit ) experience. You’ll hear how a six-month NICU stay impacted every aspect of their lives. Laura will talk candidly about post-traumatic stress, disabilities, infant loss, mental health, adaptive technology, navigating through the public school system, and general coping and adapting through a traumatic period in time. Strategies to support NICU families during and after the NICU stay will be discussed. In addition to her personal story, Laura will share quotes and comments from dozens of parent interviews, illustrating common themes and experiences shared by many NICU parents, including a discussion on how the minor co-morbidities impact the child in their early and late adolescence. From a parent’s perspective, the NICU experience is a powerful one, which many times changes the course of one’s life and career. This session reveals the real-life struggles of NICU families rarely talked about.

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