

"PLAYING IN GOD'S GARDEN: THE STORY OF OUR MADDIE ROSE"

By Robin & Mark Hunter

When we were asked to write about our Maddie Rose for this month's newsletter, we weren't quite sure what we wanted to write. Then we thought, well, if we just tell you about the wonderful life that Maddie lived, then you will all be able to see just how blessed we really were to have her in our lives.

Everything about Maddie was eventful, including my pregnancy with her. We found out that we were pregnant in March 2003, and we were overjoyed to find out that we were going to be parents again. The first trimester was very similar to our first pregnancy with Rhianna, so things seemed pretty normal. Then in July, I became infected with what we have since deemed the 'Mystery Virus'. I came down with a very high fever, and had to be admitted to Meriter for 3 days. While we were there, I was quarantined in the room, because they had no idea what we were dealing with, and didn't want to expose other pregnant women or newborns. We were



quite scared, but everything turned out fine. When we got home from the hospital, Mark went into work to try and catch up on the 3 days he missed, and when he got there, he was informed that Roto Zip was being sold to Bosch Tool Corp, and all employees of Roto Zip would all be out of work in the next few months (boy was that timing GREAT!) In the end, all that worked out wonderfully, because he ended up being hired by this great company on the east side of Madison, and 16 days after he started working there, I went into labor.

On the morning of November 28th, I awoke to the pangs of those first contractions. From experience, I know that

once they start, you usually have quite a bit of time before they let you go to the hospital. So, I did what any seasoned shopper would do on the day after Thanksgiving; I dragged Mark from bed and made him come with me to Shopko to wait outside in the cold at 4:00am (this is where I believe Maddie's love for shopping was born). We had also learned that our very good friends had given birth to their daughter the night before, so we went into St. Mary's to see them. Upon leaving, we went home to wait out the labor process of our new baby. One thing we learned after our first labor experience was this simple rule: "While you are waiting out the beginning stages of labor, SLEEP AS MUCH AS YOU CAN!!!" (this is a very important rule to keep in mind). So we spent all of the 28th laying low, napping, and trying to rest up for the delivery. What ended up backfiring on us is that while we were sitting on the couch, my contractions were never

(Continued on page 2)

Tribute to Maddie

Maddie Rose continued

really getting much closer than 7- 8 minutes apart, and they told us not to go in until they were 5 minutes apart. So we waited for hours with the contractions never getting any closer. Finally I decided to go upstairs to finish up some cleaning and preparations for her room. That action instantly brought my contractions to 3 minutes apart. At that point, we basically sprinted (well, Mark sprinted and I moved as fast as a woman in labor can move) to the car and got to Meriter very expeditiously.

Upon our arrival at Meriter, I was checked out in triage and found to be very far along in labor, and actually almost ready to deliver! They did a quick ultrasound to make sure that the baby was in a good position for delivery, and then the nurse basically had to yell at me to get into the wheelchair so that we could get to our room for delivery (Mark looked like the fool new-father-to-be running down the hallway after the wheelchair carrying 3 duffle bags, a camera case, and a couple pillows, but it was so cute!). Once in the delivery room, everything moved very

quickly, and after only 15 minutes, Maddie came roaring into our world! She was 8 lbs and 20.5 inches long, and she came out and fell asleep right away! We thought that Rhianna had

when she was going to do something. Consequently, the first lesson we learned is that we needed to listen to her more, and try to accommodate her instead of vice versa.



been a pretty hard baby in terms of sleeping, so we were really excited to have a baby that we thought was going to sleep well. Boy were we wrong.

The biggest misconception we had going into our second child was that we had already been through this, so we were the experts, and would easily be able to get Maddie onto our schedule. Maddie cured us of this flawed thinking in about 3 days! Maddie was strong willed and stubborn from her first moment out of the womb, and she wasn't going to let anyone dictate to her

Eventually, Maddie slept better, and life started to quiet down (not!). You see, that quiet sleepy baby that we first met in the hospital had a set of lungs, and she was NOT afraid to use them! To say that Maddie was a challenging baby would be putting it nicely, but we loved her just the same if not more everyday. And as a result, I think we became better parents, if nothing else at least more patient (definitely more patient!!). Maddie was what you would call a touchy baby, and I remember thinking at times that she would forever be grumpy, and never laugh or smile, or just be happy. But she

outgrew all of the frowns and screams, and developed the most beautiful smile, and contagious laugh, and when I close my eyes I can see it and hear it, and it just brightens my day.

Maddie was always trying to get into something. She had the most inquisitive stare, and it always looked as if she was trying to think up some kind of mischief to get into. She hated being stationary, and loved to move around, and once we finally got her to start crawling (and believe me we tried for months thinking she would never do it) there was no turning back. Rhianna especially loved the new "mobile Maddie", and would constantly chase her around the house trying to get her to crawl after her, or popping around the corner at her just to make her squeal with delight. Even at this young age they were the close sisters that we had hoped for and dreamed about. When it came to playtime, the girls just loved each other. One of Rhianna's favorite games was to try and get Maddie to do things that she knew she shouldn't do, and then when Maddie did them Rhianna would tattle on her! One

(cont on page 3)

Tribute to Maddie

Maddie Rose continued

morning we caught Rhi red handed when we heard her on the baby monitor telling Maddie to say "shut up", then she came running into our room to tell us Maddie was saying bad words. We gave her points for creativity, but basically told her "I don't think so!" While the girls loved to play the same games, and seemed to have the same tastes, it was interesting to see how they could look so different. Rhianna has always been petite and tall, and Maddie, Mark would say, looked like a smaller version of him. As time went on it became evident that although Rhianna was older than Maddie by 2 years, Maddie was the brute, and could hold her own when it came down to it.

The relationship between the two girls was very close knit, and to say that Maddie adored Rhianna would be an understatement. From the moment we came home with Maddie she was constantly watching Rhi and learning how to do new things. The past 2 months or so Maddie had been actively trying to go on the potty, and one morning she decided she wanted to be just like her big sister. So Maddie sat herself

down on that potty and actually peed. Mark was stunned, yet ecstatic, and Maddie had the proudest smile on her chubby little face, it was priceless. The girls also enjoyed playing with their cabbage patch dolls together and especially loved to twirl and dance around in the living room with them while daddy played some of their favorite songs on his guitar. Even though

When it came to routines, Maddie thrived on them (once we figured out how SHE wanted them to go), and one of her favorites was her bedtime routine. We sometimes did a bath, or if it wasn't bath night, we would get in our jammies and brush our teeth. Maddie loved to brush her teeth, and would actually get mad and yell "busssh teeth" if you didn't let her do it right away. A little bizarre

begun to memorize parts of certain books, so if you paused after reading part of the sentence she would finish the sentence off for you. She was a very smart girl, and a quick study too! After stories came some cuddle time, and when she was ready to sleep she told you "nigh nigh" and wanted to be put in her bed. Yes, the girl who in the beginning was a difficult sleeper, now loved to sleep so much that she would usually want to be put down before you were ready to put her down, ah the irony.

When it came to picking a favorite part of the day, for Mark that was easy: picking up the girls from daycare. Mark would open up the door to Maddie's room, and try to sneak in without her seeing him. Once she did, she would light up with the largest smile you could possibly imagine, drop whatever she was doing and come RUNNING to him yelling "daddy! daddy!" Maddie would then say bye to all her friends and teachers, and then tell them "thank you" for taking such good care of her that day. Maddie was getting very good at blowing kisses, and she loved to blow them to her teachers and

(cont on page 4)



Rhianna liked her space, and was sometimes reluctant to share, she adored her baby sister, and was very protective of her. She always gave her lots of hugs and kisses, and did silly things to make her laugh when she was sad. Rhianna wouldn't let anyone pick on Maddie, anyone that is except herself of course.

for a child yes, but hey, we were all about the good dental hygiene. Next to teeth brushing, storytime was Maddie's favorite time of night. We would sit in her rocker in her room, and read 2-3 stories with her before putting her to bed. As she got older and more vocal, she developed favorite stories, and would ask for them by name. She had even

Tribute to Maddie

Maddie Rose continued

Mommy as she was leaving daycare and heading home.



We could go on for days, weeks, and pages more telling you of the millions of tiny little things that our sweet angel girl did in a day that are special to us in some way or another. Instead we've given you a glimpse into just a few of those things that made her the ray of sunshine in our lives that she was, and continues to be, as she lives on in our hearts and our memories. We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this, and for the wonderful outpouring of support, help, and love that we have received from everyone. It is appreciated more than mere words could possibly say. As a final thought, I would like to leave you with a quote that I actually read from someone else's obituary that appeared the same day as Maddie's. I found comfort in the words, and thought it suited Maddie and depicted how she would feel just beautifully.

"Maddie Rose, you will be loved and remembered in our hearts forever.

A limb has fallen from our family tree; I keep hearing a voice that says "grieve not for me"

Remember the best times, the laughter the song, the good life I lived while I was strong

Continue my heritage I'm counting on you, keep smiling and surely the sun will shine through

My mind is at ease my soul is at rest, remembering all, how I truly was blessed

Continue traditions no matter how small, go on with your life don't just stare at the wall

I miss you all dearly so keep up your chin, until the day comes we're together again."

-Author unknown-

