



Tangi lifestyles

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North Oaks
OB-GYN

Out Front in Women's
Healthcare

**Classic and
Timeless Homes**

Courtney Roth
**A Mother's
Dedication**

Dearest Tripp,

Each day when I look into your eyes, I feel so guilty. Not because I think that it's my fault that you are suffering, but I feel guilty because I am healthy. I have perfect eyesight, I have healthy skin, I have my fingernails and toenails, and I can breathe easily without having to struggle for every breath I take. These are so many things that so many of us take for granted every single day.

-Excerpted from Courtney's blog, "EBing a Mommy," February 4, 2011



Courtney Roth a mother's dedication to her son



"EB"ing a mommy

Photography by **Summer Boyd**

"It's touching that so many strangers who don't even really know my situation are so supportive,"

Courtney writes.

"I'm blessed with the best support system I could ever ask for."



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onchatoula-native Courtney Roth is 25 years old, a nurse, and stay-at-home mom to son Tripp, 22 months. On good days, Tripp plays his drum, shakes his bottom, and commands anyone in the room to snap their fingers along with him. On bad days, though, he listens to his mom sing to him, rocking back and forth, while they wait for the morphine to ease his constant pain.

Tripp has Epidermolysis Bullosa, or EB for short. It is a rare genetic disorder that causes his fragile skin and mucous membranes to blister with any friction; his tiny body is covered in raw, red sores. Courtney must keep everything bandaged, salve for his head, hands and feet, all of which have blisters, just not as severe.

When Tripp was born, physically he looked perfect, except for one large blister that covered his head and very long fingernails. But shortly after Courtney delivered, doctors told her and her husband, Randy, that Tripp probably had EB, a disease that affects about one in two million babies. Doctors predicted Tripp would not live to see his first birthday.

Soon, the disease began to ravage Tripp's insides as well; at about three months he had to have a feeding tube inserted into his abdomen because sores inside of his mouth made it impossible for him to eat. Shortly after, a tracheotomy became necessary for Tripp to breathe, although his breathing is still labored.

EB requires round-the-clock care, and while Courtney tends to him daily, Randy and both grandmothers also ensure Tripp receives excellent care. Doctors credit Courtney's meticulous care for extending Tripp's life this long.

Bath time is particularly harrowing, since all of the bandages must come off, exposing Tripp's wounds, then reapplied along with

"I know that he understands me when I tell him how many people out there are praying for him."

several ointments that prevent infection. The process can take up to three hours. And in spite of the difficulties EB poses for Tripp and the rest of the family, Courtney is quick to count her blessings.

"We have learned with time that every day we have with our little boy is a gift from God. He was sent to us for a reason and he was put on this earth for a reason. He is an angel. The joy of my life, what I look forward to every day," she writes on her blog.

In a recent news feature on Tripp, She admitted to WWL reporter Bill Capo that she doesn't get out much; when she wants to eat out, they order in. His pediatrician, Dr. Lisa DeFusco of Ochsner Rothschild Pediatrics, makes house calls and the pharmacist delivers the many prescriptions that must be administered to Tripp.

Dr. DeFusco, also interviewed for the story by WWL, noted Courtney's strength and courage in the battle for Tripp's life.

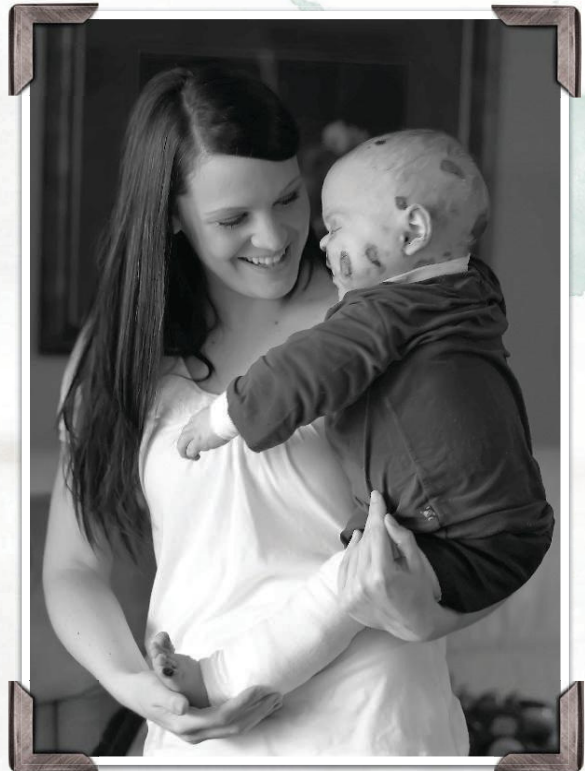
"She never says, 'Why me?' Not once since I've known this family has she looked at me said, 'Why did this happen to me?'" Dr. DeFusco said.

Instead, Courtney is thankful for support system she has found in the blogosphere and in prayer.

"It's touching that so many strangers who don't even really know my situation are so supportive," Courtney writes. "I'm blessed with the best support system I could ever ask for."

Not one for complaining or taking time for herself, a recent blog post asks readers to forgive her absence; Tripp has had a few good days in a row, and she's used the down time to "de-stress." Also, she invokes their prayers for two little boys with EB without supportive families to tend to them. She writes:

"So there's something that's been weighing so heavy on my heart lately. And if I'm going to be honest, I really am not crazy about doing



this kind of stuff on my blog, but I feel like it's important to ask you guys for a favor. Not for me, but for [two] kids who are battling EB alone, without a family."

She goes on to tell about Carson and Anton, and the families with the heart, but not the finances to adopt them.

It's hard to imagine having to endure such a horrific disease alone. Courtney hopes that by raising these two boys' issues, they can enter into loving families more like her own.

"Tripp is one lucky little boy to have so many people who love and care about him," she writes.

Courtney also notes that it is easy to forget that while Tripp isn't physically where other children his age are, he is fully intact mentally. She adds:

"I know that he understands me when I tell him how many people out there are praying for him."



OUT FRONT

WITH EXPERIENCE,
COMMITMENT
AND CARE

North Oaks Obstetrics and Gynecology has been a leading medical practice in Tangipahoa Parish and the state of Louisiana for obstetrical and gynecological care for over three decades. Since its inception in 1977, the practice has continued to be physician-owned in spite of the trend where more private practices are being purchased by hospitals.

“We’ve always felt that owning our practice would give us the ability to be flexible both with providing innovative patient care and adjusting to the demands in the healthcare industry,” said Dr. Bill Beacham, President and partner of North Oaks Ob-Gyn.

Today the practice is showing that flexibility through its recent decision to begin offering da Vinci Robotic Surgical Procedures for patients looking for alternatives to open or laparoscopic hysterectomies.

“This was a big decision for us,” said Dr. Dwan Mabry, Vice President and partner. “We knew that our patients were looking for alternatives and we wanted to be out front and meet our patient’s needs. With no robot in Hammond, our group engaged the local hospitals and expressed our interest in having the ability to provide state-of-the-art surgical procedures locally.” →

Drs. Bill Beacham and Bill Black



Dr. Dwan Mabry



The physicians
of North Oaks
Obstetrics and
Gynecology



Drs. Brian Ashford and Gary Agena



In the meantime North Oaks Ob-Gyn began the process of getting their team of doctors trained so they would be ready when the decision was made to purchase a da Vinci Surgical System.

Today, both Dr. Mabry and Dr. Gary Agena are certified da Vinci Surgeons and are distinguished as the first surgeons to be certified in Hammond.

“We have been traveling to Baton Rouge when necessary to do robotic surgery,” said Dr. Agena, partner of North Oaks Ob-Gyn. “It’s been a sacrifice; nevertheless, being able to

offer our patients an alternative has made it worthwhile.”

Dr. Agena said the practice is glad that North Oaks Health Systems has announced that they purchased a da Vinci Surgical System. Dr. Agena and Dr. Mabry should be able to provide da Vinci robotic surgery locally within the next few months.

While there is quite a bit of excitement about the future of robotic

surgery in Hammond, the doctors and the staff at North Oaks Ob-Gyn are just as excited about the other changes that have taken place at the practice.

Dr. Brian Ashford, chief resident of the 2010 LSU New Orleans Residency School, joined the group last July.

“Dr. Ashford has been a great addition to our staff,” said Dr. Mabry. “We feel blessed to be able to attract a young doctor with Dr. Ashford’s talent. It really enhances our group dynamics.”

Dr. Mabry said the combination of young skilled physicians like Dr. Agena and Dr. Ashford along with the experience she, Dr. Black and Dr. Beacham bring to the table has made a perfect environment for the doctors to continue to “grow.” The group has also added Peggy Gautreau to their Certified Midwifery Nurse staff.

Additionally, in the last two years North Oaks Ob-Gyn has been working aggressively to be out front with the changes in Health Information Technology (HIT).

The practice upgraded its technology to enhance patient care through the implementation of a new practice management system, a fully integrated electronic medical records system, e-prescriptions and on-line patient services. This information can be securely accessed through the practice’s website at www.northoaksobgyn.com. Patients can visit the website to view a comprehensive list of services offered and receive monthly updates about the practice.

With all the changes and the focus on the future, the doctors at North Oaks Ob-Gyn seem most excited when you talk with them about delivering babies. With the support of an outstanding team of Certified Midwifery Nurses (CMN), the group is able to provide a solid team approach when it comes to obstetrical care.

“It’s amazing when you think that the practice has delivered over 38,000 babies,” said Dr. Ashford. “If you put

“As one of the co-founders of the practice it is really rewarding to see that our new doctors are making the commitment to continue the strong tradition of innovative care that our patients have become accustomed to expect from us.”

DR. BILL BLACK

that in perspective, you could say that our doctors have delivered a third of Tangipahoa Parish.”

“I’m proud of our group,” said Dr. Black. “As one of the co-founders of the practice it is really rewarding to see that our new doctors are making the commitment to continue the strong tradition of innovative care that our patients have become accustomed to expect from us.”

Dr. Black said the physicians and staff have always challenged themselves to be a leader not only amongst the medical practices in Hammond, but also in the community.

“I am also excited for our patients that they have choices in healthcare they have never had before in Hammond, Ponchatoula and southeast Louisiana.”

The way physicians deliver healthcare is changing and the North Oaks Obstetrics and Gynecology doctors and staff are committed to stay out front and be a leader in women’s healthcare.

“*We’ve always felt that owning our practice would give us the ability to be flexible both with providing innovative patient care and adjusting to the demands in the healthcare industry.*”

DR. BILL BEACHAM



Amy Linn, Mary Byars and Peggy Gautreau

OUT FRONT

WITH CERTIFIED NURSE MIDWIVES

The North Oaks Ob-Gyn Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) are trained and licensed in both nursing and midwifery and are certified by the American College of Nurse Midwives.

“Our midwives partner with our physicians to ensure that our patients receive the highest quality of care during their pregnancy,” said Dr. Dwan Mabry. “Delivering babies is a team effort and our midwives have been a key part of our success over the years.”

In addition to delivering babies, the North Oaks Ob-Gyn Certified Nurse Midwives perform annual gynecological exams, family planning and preconception care, prenatal care and menopause management.