

My name is Reyna Lajiness and my husband is Daryl Lajiness. We found out we were pregnant in mid January of 2002. It was a surprise to us as we were not intentionally trying to become pregnant, but it was definitely a blessing. As soon as we found out about the baby we knew that we did not want to follow the now "traditional" form of childbirth. My husband and I are both chiropractors by profession, and our philosophy about childbirth and other forms of "healthcare", which we refer to as "sickcare" do not fit into the social norm. We believe that the body comes equipped with everything it needs to function properly, and that little to no intervention is needed to experience true health.

Following our philosophy we wanted to bring our baby into the world with as little intervention as possible, so that from the beginning our baby could have the "healthiest" start possible, both physically and emotionally. The question to us at that point was where could we birth our baby, because we knew a hospital was not the place for us. I called around to several hospitals to find out about how we could be put in touch with midwives, the only problem was that they only seemed to work in the hospitals. When I was about 10 weeks pregnant a friend of ours pointed us in the direction of Linda Johnson a CNM who had just opened her own birth center.

The birth center happened to be 5 minutes from our home and office. We set an appointment to meet with Linda and after our first meeting we knew Mother's Own was the place for us. The building itself was beautiful, it is decorated in soothing colors, and with all the amenities an expecting mother could ever need ( a birthing tub, birth ball, pillows, a bed, couches, living room area, kitchen area, etc. ). My husband and I both loved the atmosphere and we could picture having our baby there. Linda's professional and reassuring attitude made us even more comfortable.

In our first meeting we discussed finances, pros and cons of a non-hospital birth, risks, and emergency planning. Finances were an issue because we did not have insurance, so we would be paying out of pocket, but the birth center is very affordable and worth every cent for the experience and professional care we received. Linda only accepts patients who are low risk and pregnancies that are not complicated.

Fortunately I was low risk being 26, healthy and under chiropractic care, and having no unforeseen complications. The pros and cons were clear to us, and as far as emergencies go, there is a hospital 5 minutes away. After all these issues were covered I was ready to begin the journey of natural childbirth.

I began prenatal care the next week when I was 11 weeks pregnant. At each visit Linda was armed with a battery of information for us, some of the information given to us over the duration of prenatal care included: a personal prenatal record sheet, reduced cost, effectiveness related to birth centers, midwifery info, LaLeche League info, books and videos on birth and water birth, suggested readings and internet sites, health info for mom and baby, prenatal testing info (glucose tolerance test, PKU, AFP etc.), and several articles on breastfeeding. We learned quickly that

Linda was very well educated, and seemed to enjoy knowing everything about her profession.

My husband and I were very impressed with her wide base of knowledge. My pregnancy was fairly uneventful. I was very morning sick for the first 3 months, but Linda was always there reminding me to eat lots of protein, drink lots of water, and get my rest. At each prenatal visit we would first sit down and talk about any concerns or questions we may have, and then I would weigh myself and check my urine for glucose/protein. Then Linda would check my blood pressure, uterine size, and listen to fetal heart rate. I had a total of 8 prenatal visits with my last appointment set for 9-2-02 (Labor day), but I never made it to the last appointment because labor began on 8-30-02 at 12:30am.

My water broke and contractions were 5 minutes apart right away. I continued to labor at home until 5am when my husband called Linda to let her know I was in labor. We met her at the birth center at 6am and I was already 5cm dilated. I was having pretty intense back labor, so Linda suggested I go ahead and get into the birth tub. The water was definitely welcome relief for my aches and pain. I began pushing at 8:15am and after 55 minutes of pushing I delivered a baby boy into the water. I did not receive any medication during my labor, and there was no major intervention to the baby or myself.

During the whole labor my husband and Linda were right by my side encouraging me to listen to what my body wanted me to do, and giving me all the support I needed. After the birth while I was holding my son, I felt such a sense of accomplishment. I had done it! And I did it the way I had wanted to, without drugs or intervention! My baby was with me the whole time after he was born. We were skin to skin for about 3 hours and it was a great time of bonding. The only time he left my side was for Linda to weigh and examine him.

He nursed after 15 minutes and again 2 more times before we left the birth center. I had something to eat and drink and Linda examined me. I felt pretty good right after. . .just a bit tired. Labor had lasted from approximately midnight the night before until 9:10 am when the baby was born. The baby was excellent, we named him Ethan Lawrence, and he was 5 lbs. 11ozs and 19" long. Within 4 1/2 hours of his birth we were headed home from the birth center. I really give credit to feeling so well because I did not receive an epidural during labor and I was able to recover more quickly.

I really can't thank Linda enough for providing me with the experience I was looking for with the birth of my baby. I would definitely use the birth center again for any future children! Linda has also been a wonderful resource since the baby was born. She has answered thousands of my "New Mom" questions, giving me all kinds of advice and encouragement on numerous topics. Linda has definitely gone above and beyond her duties in every aspect and I am forever grateful!

Yours in Health, Dr. Reyna L. Lajiness D. C.

Daryl and Reyna returned to the birth center for the birth of Hannah in 2004.