Premature Infant Rescued During Sandy Evacuation Is Thriving

When Superstorm Sandy slammed into the northeast a year ago, The New York University Langone Medical Center suffered a major blow as the basement filled with water and the hospital's backup generators failed.

CBS News' chief medical correspondent Dr. Jon LaPook is affiliated with that hospital and was there the night of the storm [1]. He saw doctors and nurses using sleds to move patients down dark staircases and into ambulances to be evacuated.

During the evacuation, LaPook met the Shepherd family and their baby, Jackson, who was one of the 20 vulnerable newborns evacuated from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Jo-An Tremblay-Shepherd and her son were on 9th floor of the hospital when the storm hit Manhattan. The baby was born premature at 27 weeks and for two months had relied on machines to help keep him alive.

"We saw some flickering at some point and that's when the generator kicked in," said Tremblay-Shepherd. "Shortly after that the power went off completely and all of the monitors - everything just went."

When the lights went out and respirators stopped pumping, doctors and nurses started the complex evacuation of 20 fragile newborns down nine flights of stairs.

"By the time it was time for Jackson to go, we had to go at the drop of a hat," said Tremblay-Shepherd.

Jackson was the last one out. With the help of a flashlight, a nurse carefully carried the baby and his oxygen tank down the stairs. LaPook said that he met the family [2] then, in the lobby of the hospital.

LaPook said he could see the look of a "mother who was determined" in Tremblay-Shepherd's eyes and that she was in "protective mother mode."

"I just wanted to get out. You know," Tremblay-Shepherd said. "If we were going to evacuate, I was like 'Let's do this.'"

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