

## Soleil's Birth Story



We drove to Lake Michigan after our last prenatal appt. This was also our last picture as a family of 3.



Almost 39 weeks pregnant. Holding both of my babies. Glad we got this picture because Soleil was born about 12 hours later!

I had been having lots of Braxton Hicks all week and at night I had some cramping and could feel the baby moving down into my pelvis. Not a great feeling, but I knew it wouldn't be long now. We had a prenatal appointment on Tuesday night and Dorothy confirmed that the head was settled. Our daughter, Terra (19 months), was born a week and a half early and I was already a few days past that point with this baby so I was READY. However, I knew I should be prepared to stay pregnant a

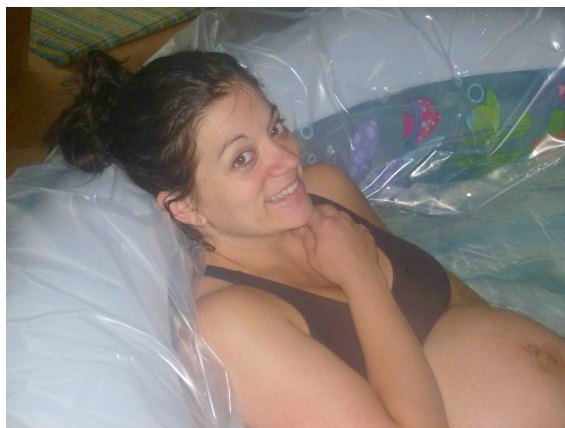
few more weeks in case the baby wasn't ready yet. Little did we know, the midwives would be heading to our house 12 hours after our appointment!

Chris, Terra, and I got a full night of sleep and then I woke up around 6am feeling what I remembered to be contractions. I told Chris and he told me to try to get some more rest because with Terra this part had taken the longest. I tried to lay in bed, but felt like I needed to be up and moving during a contraction. They were already between 6-8 minutes apart so I called Patrice to let her know. She told me that one of my friends, also a client, was having contractions as well and to call again when contractions got closer and/or more intense.

Terra woke up around 7:20, but I was already too busy concentrating to pay attention to her. I really wanted to be able to snuggle with my baby girl before she became a big sister, but I just couldn't handle her hanging on me. I did not want to be touched! Chris was entertaining her AND blowing up our birth pool. I was really surprised at how quickly the contractions kept coming. Probably only 20 minutes after I called the first time, I called Patrice back and told her they were 3-5 minutes apart. She asked if I wanted them to start heading over to our house and I said, "I don't want you guys to be sitting here forever." Then I had a contraction on the phone. I guess Patrice could tell by listening that it was time because she said, "Okay, I'm going to hang up and come over there." Good thing too, because everything started going REALLY fast after that!

At around 8am Chris called our friend who we had arranged to watch Terra and then he started getting her ready to go. I was in the bedroom holding onto the changing table and my body was shaking as I tried really hard not to push. Chris came in to help me through some contractions, but then I started to feel the baby in my butt and wanted to sit on the toilet. Our friend showed up to pick up Terra so Chris went to put her car seat in her car. At that same time, my water broke on the toilet! I was both amazed and overwhelmed at how quickly everything was happening! It was nowhere CLOSE to this fast with Terra!

The birth pool was blown up, but had no water yet so I went into the bedroom convinced we were not going to have a water birth and starting getting the bed ready. I propped up a bunch of pillows and got comfortable. Chris couldn't see the head so he started filling up the pool and it was ready in no time. Thank goodness! I didn't even care that it wasn't particularly warm. Patrice showed up at 8:48am and the first thing she said was, "Whew, you're still pregnant!" I was so relieved to be in the pool, to have Patrice there, and to be done with those painful 1<sup>st</sup> stage contractions. Once you go through transition your body just takes over and does all the work to give your mind a break. It felt really good to push and I found that it didn't hurt until the baby's head started moving down the birth canal.



Smiling between contractions

Laurie and Jen showed up just after Patrice. Patrice said she was going to stay until 9:30 and then she had to leave to make it to Muskegon for Nicole's birth. Things had slowed down a little bit considering how fast the 1<sup>st</sup> stage had been and Patrice thought there might be some cervix still in the

way preventing the baby's head from passing. She was right! She held it out of the way for 3 or 4 contractions and although it was painful I knew it was helping. 9:30 came and Patrice had to leave. She gave me a hug and a kiss and said, "I've never left a birth when someone was already pushing." But I knew we were in good hands with Laurie and Jen so I still felt relaxed and confident.

I turned onto my left side in the pool and tried pushing like that because it had worked significantly during Terra's birth. I only stayed in that position for one contraction because I was not comfortable. I changed to kneeling and leaning forward, resting my arms on the pool. I could really feel the head moving down with each contraction, and I stayed in this position for about 10 minutes. I knew I didn't want to have the baby in this position so at around 10:00 I turned back over to semi-sitting in the pool. The baby's head was visible, but not staying out between contractions. As her head was being born, I just remembered to blow through the contractions. With Terra, Patrice had coached me on what to do and she helped me a lot with counter pressure on my tissues. This time I felt really confident and calm through the whole process. It only took about 3 contractions for her head to be born and I felt so relieved once that was done! Even though the baby wasn't born yet, I just relaxed even more knowing the hardest part was over. That time between contractions when the head is out is so surreal! You can finally see your baby, but you don't know if it's a boy or girl yet. The time seems to go so slow. Then with the next contraction, our little baby was born at 10:20am.



She started crying right away and I remember her looking just like Terra when she was first born. We still hadn't checked to see if it was a boy or girl. I had been convinced for awhile that it was a boy because this pregnancy had been so different. Jen actually captured the moment perfectly with this picture of me lifting the baby's leg to see. I was surprised, but very happy when we saw it was another little girl! (I have a sister only 17 months younger than me, so I was happy Terra would get the opportunity to enjoy growing up with a little sister so close in age.)



Is it a boy or girl?

Her cord was short like Terra's had been so I couldn't bring her all the way up to get her to nurse right away. There was already a lot of blood in the pool from the placenta separating and after about 10 minutes Laurie suggested we cut the cord and get the placenta delivered so I could get out of the water. Chris cut the cord and then he took little Soleil while Laurie helped me in the pool. I'm glad he got that special time with her because Terra didn't leave my arms until the newborn exam an hour and a half after she was born.

I really enjoyed having a morning birth this time because we had the rest of the day to just relax and enjoy her. I got right into bed and started nursing our sweet little baby. She latched on right away like a pro! I pretty much got the first hour and half to myself with her while Laurie and Jen were doing paperwork and starting to clean up with Chris. (That's one of the nicest things walking out of the bedroom a few hours later and the house is spotless and the wash is started already.) Laurie and Jen did the newborn exam a little before noon. I was surprised that Soleil was a whole pound heavier than Terra had been because she seemed so tiny.

We made all of our phone calls to our family and they were shocked Soleil was already born. Everything happened so fast we didn't even have time to call and tell them I was in labor! Laurie and Jen left around 12:50. We are so happy to have had Laurie attend both of our daughters' births and to catch Soleil! You are such a blessing to us! And I am very glad to have shared this birth with Jen as well. I felt a special bond with her at our prenatal appointments so I'm happy she was there. Your words of encouragement during labor were so helpful and helped me stay positive, relaxed, and confident! And of course we would've liked to have Patrice there when Soleil was born, but are very thankful she made it to Muskegon in time to supervise Dorothy helping little Sophia Jane into the world! (I think it's funny that both of our girls share their birthdays with other Full Circle babies who have chiropractors for Dads! Cool random tidbit.)

Terra came home about an hour after the midwives left and she seemed so big to me all of a sudden. She wasn't my baby anymore! She has been a great big sissy so far. She gives sweet hugs and kisses to Soleil, gets her blankets and burp cloths for Mommy, and loves to help buckle her car seat. She asks to hold her sister all the time too and is so gentle.



Terra meeting her little sister



Terra loves holding Soleil.

Soleil's birth would not have been possible without Chris! I am so glad he was home that morning because everything happened so quickly, and there's no way I could've gotten everything ready myself. Just the day before, he had been working all day helping a local farmer harvest his CSA shares so I'm glad little Soleil waited for her Daddy to be home! In the four short hours from my 1<sup>st</sup> contraction to when Soleil was born, Chris got the birth pool set up, made sure Terra was taken care of, got me into the pool, made me the best smoothie I've ever had, and stayed right behind me the whole time. I held his hand through every contraction and I could feel his positive energy and love coursing through me! "You make such a great team," Patrice had told us between contractions. I couldn't agree more! I love you, babe!

Chris and I are so thankful to have found Full Circle Midwifery when we moved to this area in July of 2011. Since then, you wonderful ladies have helped us bring two beautiful girls into the world just like we wanted; home water births with no medical interventions. You have all helped us in more ways than you will ever know! You are a huge reason why we continue to live in this part of Michigan despite our struggle to find jobs in our fields of expertise. We love you all so much!

-Chris, Jeanna, Terra, and Soleil



Back at Lake Michigan before our 2 week postnatal.  
This time we are a family of 4!