

# daddy's girl

## offering comfort — and peace of mind — to growing families



When Ava Thanos was born, her mother was seriously nervous. Still an inpatient at **Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital** just days after giving birth to her first child, Jennifer Thanos, now 33, couldn't sleep. "I had this little bundle next to my bed," she said. "Every move she made, I was awake to try to assess the situation. And it was just a yawn, or just a stretch. You just think 'What's wrong? What didn't I do?' or 'What do I have to do now?'"

It was a knowledgeable nurse on the night staff who gave Thanos the idea — and the permission that the new mom needed — to put Ava in the nursery for the night so that her mom could get one last good night's sleep before the new family, including dad Adam Thanos, 33, was on its own. "I hadn't realized that I wasn't sleeping well, but I was in the deepest sleep that night," Thanos remembered. "The staff was phenomenal. They're really there to guide you and help you figure out this thing called parenthood."

Now it's time to visit Good Samaritan Hospital again. Ava, just 16 months old, is going to be a big sister.

### Room for baby

The Thanos family is counting the short days until they welcome home their newest member, a little boy due this spring. Thanos said this time around, a few things are different. And not just her own confidence level. The hospital itself has seen some improvements since the Thanoses made their last visit.

With the help of philanthropic support from former patients, physicians and hospital employees and other generous community members, infants born at Good Samaritan Hospital have an even better start at life. In the past few years, the hospital had updated its labor and delivery rooms to ensure that soon-to-be parents have the experience they hope for, as well as access to the highest level of care



in the event of complications. Charitable gifts have enabled the hospital to stay current with the facilities, equipment and expertise to maintain the highest level of perinatal and neonatal care for mothers and babies in the area.

What the Thanoses will notice this time is the updated Family Care Center, where more than 2,000 mothers recuperate after labor and delivery with their newborns each year. Each room in the center is a private one, which gives families more privacy and more flexibility in visitations. Not merely the preference of patients, single rooms provide a sterile environment for recovering patients, as well as more privacy for new parents to speak confidentially with their caregivers. Fund raising is still underway for the renovation, which is expanding the unit to serve the growing Downers Grove community and refreshing all public areas in the unit, including the family waiting area.

### Soon-to-be sister

Lots of first-time dads may think they'll be in that waiting room when their children are born. In fact, even Adam Thanos — an involved dad who changed his work schedule to care for Ava most of

the week — went into the labor and delivery room expecting to be more of a witness than a participant in Ava's birth. But plans change, like the plans for a natural birth for Ava: Jennifer's physician, Karenmarie Meyer, MD, discovered that the baby was "posterior," or facing the wrong direction, and wouldn't be able to come out the birth canal. "This is one of the reasons why I was glad to be at a hospital like Good Samaritan," Jennifer said. "I liked knowing that we were ready for anything."

So a Caesarean brought Ava Koehler Thanos to the world, and she was placed in her father's arms. "I'll never forget the look on his face," Jennifer said. "She was perfectly silent with him, perfectly content. She was a daddy's girl from the start."

Ava's a little young to understand yet that things are about to change, but this time the Thanoses are more confident and they know Ava and her little brother (Adam, after his dad) will adapt. From the staff at Good Samaritan, their mom learned some valuable lessons. "Kids are more resilient than we give them credit for," she said. "Adults are the ones who don't adapt as quickly." ■