

directly to Mary while the remainder were frozen. Mary became pregnant straight away, but six weeks later, she miscarried. It was a blow, but they all gained an understanding of what can happen during early pregnancy.

“Human pregnancy is so often taken for granted, but it’s amazing that it works. The body often reacts to the embryo the first time by rejecting it, but the second time, it is more used to the new life and accepts it,” says Darryl.

During the second try, Mary was on a natural cycle, not on drug induced preparation for the womb. This time, it worked perfectly. Over the following nine months, the couple saw Mary once or twice a week. Once a week, she received massage from Rachel and healing and chakra balancing from Darryl. The couple have a business called ‘Soul Ascension’ and their skills were ideal as Mary prepared for birth. Constantly surrounded by love, Jamie Rose could not have had a better beginning as she grew in utero. Despite the joy and anticipation, awaiting the birth was hard on Rachel. It was difficult to see another woman carrying their child. The loss of her own ability to do so came back to haunt her and there were many tears. For Mary, the pregnancy was so different from carrying her own children.

“It felt a bit weird, I didn’t have the excitement or the sense of anticipation I had with my own children. I wasn’t getting anything ready for the baby and I felt no attachment at all. When the baby started moving I felt excitement for Rachel and Darryl – it was their baby that was moving.”

At last, the time came. Mary’s waters broke at 7am on May 24. But the long awaited dream was about to become a nightmare. At 2pm contractions started and Mary went to Pukekohe Birthing Centre. During the afternoon, contractions were slow, nothing like Mary’s previous labours. Then the monitor showed signs of foetal distress. Mary was transferred to Middlemore Hospital by ambulance, arriving at 6pm. There, everything seemed to slow down. There was no sense of urgency among the staff and only one hospital midwife, just before finishing her shift, talked with Mary’s midwife.

Darryl: “The specialist’s understudy came after 20 minutes. The baby was still showing signs of distress. More anxious time passed, and then someone said we were ‘heading off.’ We thought ‘where?’ It appeared it was to have a caesarean, but nobody had really talked to us about it. The baby was stuck, with no fluid to move. At the theatre, they were just about to begin when there was an emergency and we were out again, waiting for another hour. Jamie Rose was finally born by caesarean at 10pm, after being in distress at the hospital for four hours.”



Jamie, a tiny, newborn bundle of joy



Darryl and Rachel with Jamie Rose

Rachel was with Mary, along with a birthing friend when the baby was delivered. “The anaesthetist said it was a ‘lucky call’ because Jamie was born black – such a dark blue she was purple. She was worked on by the specialist and given a little oxygen until after 10 minutes, she cried and turned pink at last. We came so close to losing her. She has the marks on her face from where she was stuck, but they say those will fade in time.”

Jamie Rose, weighing 7lb 3oz, was at last safely in Rachel and Darryl’s arms, but with the emergency, the birthing plan for Rachel to stay at Pukekohe Birthing Unit to bond with Jamie while Mary went home ‘went out the window.’ Instead, everyone was booked into a single room, a distressing situation for the surrogate mother. Under a 1950s law, a baby can’t leave hospital until the natural mother, the one who gave birth, is discharged. There was no law to cover the fact that Rachel did not give birth, but is the biological mother. Another outdated rule stated that adoptive parents are not allowed a newborn baby until after a 12 day stand down, to give the delivering mother time to change her mind about giving her baby up for adoption. Fortunately the law was changed just before Jamie Rose was born, so they didn’t have to wait the 12 days. The maternity unit at Pukekohe said Mary could be transferred there to recover and Rachel and Darryl were at last able to take Jamie home.

Mary visits and talks on the phone to Rachel regularly. “Jamie is a special little girl. She feels like a niece. When I see how they look at her and how much they all love her I feel happy because I helped,” she says.

One more step was left for Rachel and Darryl – to be recognised by the courts as Jamie’s legal parents and the issuing of a new birth certificate with their names on it.

The pathway to Jamie’s birth is covered with ‘screeds and screeds’ of paperwork. Throughout the process, Rachel and Darryl received tremendous help from a surrogacy website www.nz-surrogacy.com “The support and advice from complete strangers who had experienced the same process was brilliant,” says Darryl. “It was a harrowing journey at times and cost about \$40,000, including legal fees – the deposit for our home.” He looks fondly at Jamie who is watching him intently, as if she knows we are talking about her, “but it was so definitely worth it!” ■