



Jordan Folloder named ‘Maximum Mom’

by Nikki Rosenberg

Through her work as a representative in the Public Relations department at Texas Children’s Hospital, Elizabeth Hipp meets many strong, amazing new mothers. However, Jordan Folloder was the “first and only mother she thought of when reading the requirements for the Maximum Mom Award.”

The Maximum Mom Award, part of Houston Woman Magazine’s Third Annual Nominate HER Awards program, is given to a woman with strong moral character, who has been an extraordinary mother to her children and, thereby, serves as an excellent role model.

As a result of Hipp’s nomination, Folloder received the prestigious award at a luncheon at the Hotel Icon on June 25.

Folloder’s journey into motherhood began in October 2007 when she and her husband, Harry, shared the special news with friends and family that they were expecting twins, due on May 20, 2008. However, in spite of bed rest and medical attention, the twins were born almost four months premature. Noah (weighing in at 1 lb., 5 oz.) and Samantha (weighing in at 1 lb., 4 oz.), were delivered on January 27 of this year.

Hipp met Folloder when the proud mother of the severely premature twins, approached her in the Level III NICU at Texas Children’s Hospital to introduce the babies. Hipp, working with another family at the time, was so moved by Folloder’s strength and determination that the two quickly bonded. When Hipp found out that she and Folloder were the same age, her respect and admiration grew.

Hipp said, “At 27 years old, Jordan has overcome more than most people do in a lifetime. Every time I see Jordan in the hospital, she always has a great smile on her face. She never complains about the countless appointments or the constant traveling to see various doctors and specialists. While littered with hurdles, Jordan’s outlook on life has been so positive, and her strength is immeasurable —much like her children. Sammy and Noah will grow up to know no limits as their potential is infinite, thanks to the love and support of their mother.”

Knowing how rare it is for such small babies to survive, Folloder remained positive and vigilant for her children. Throughout the more than 30 surgeries the babies underwent during those first months, she did not lose hope for her twins. Her strength was rewarded when the family was finally discharged from the hospital five months later.

On surviving those first months, Folloder said, “I believe each of us has an inner strength that is hidden until a frightening situation presents itself. Of course, Harry and I were terrified at the various issues that the twins faced, but in the end, it was never about us, it has always been about Sammy and Noah. They run this ship; they are totally our leaders. From the moment they were born, Harry and I made a decision to listen to them. If they had the will to live, then we had the will to fight for them. Their will to live is what keeps each of us going and motivates us to fight right along with them.”

Over a year later, Sammy and Noah still have therapy sessions at Texas Children’s Hospital five days a week. Folloder attends every session, learning with her children as the therapists work on various skills.

Although Folloder quit her job to be with the twins full-time, she is grateful to have the support of both sets of grandparents when help or advice is needed.

Folloder said, “We have been blessed in countless ways throughout this journey, however, one of the most significant gifts was our relationship to both of our parents and our close proximity to them. Whenever I need help, they are waiting in the wings with eager hands and open hearts.”

The relationship Folloder has with her husband is another reason she is able to remain so strong throughout her trials.

Folloder said, “I was given the only man in the world who could step up to this monstrous plate, embrace our children for their differences, and love me even more for what we have been through together...I am the luckiest mom and wife in the world.” The Folloders give back to the hospital that saved the lives of their children by supporting the Annual Bad Pants Open Golf Tournament, which benefits the Texas Children’s Newborn Center. Sammy and Noah were the spokesbabies for the 11th Annual Tournament and signed on for the 12th one this year. Their story furnishes hope and support for other parents dealing with a similar situation. However, these actions aid Folloder’s healing, as well.

“Sharing my story is a way for me to cope, grieve, remember and celebrate all of the hurdles we have crossed,” said Folloder. “If our story gives another family hope, then I feel we have come full circle...I have always felt that we each have a calling, some people find theirs later in life, ours found us fairly early. We are committed to raising awareness and money for Texas Children’s Hospital. By doing so, Sammy and Noah will always be a part of TCH, and the staff will forever remain in our hearts, as well.”

Hipp commented, “I am in awe of Jordan. She always finds time to act in the best interests of her children and to give back to Texas Children’s. I hope one day to be as wonderful a mother as she is today.”