

It was quite the New Year’s surprise when 20-year-old Cora discovered she was pregnant. While excited about a new baby, worry came in equal measure. The mom-to-be was young, unemployed and uncertain of her future, which is why she visited the Houston County Health Department in Georgia to create a plan on how she would care for her child.

“They helped me find the right doctors and asked if I would be interested in a program called Nurse-Family Partnership where I have my own personal nurse,” Cora says.

She was paired with TeQuiera from Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) at the Houston County Health Department.

“Cora was anxious at the beginning,” TeQuiera remembers. “I knew it would be my job to give her the tools to succeed.”

To help assuage Cora’s concerns, TeQuiera connected her with healthy food resources in the community and gave her information to ensure a safe



During the pandemic, Cora and her daughter (shown below) had to adjust to doing visits by video conference (known as telehealth) with nurse TeQuiera (shown above).

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-NFP MOM CORA

and successful pregnancy, including where to find prenatal care.

Unfortunately, Cora’s initial worries were not unfounded. Just five months after becoming pregnant, it all came crashing down and she had a miscarriage.

“It broke my heart,” TeQuiera says. “I helped her take the necessary time to process the grief. I became a support system for her.”

As Cora’s pillar of emotional support, TeQuiera vowed to be there for her for as long as she needed. But, after a short while, Cora left the program.

### A Second Chance

A few months later, TeQuiera received a surprise call with wonderful news — Cora was pregnant again.

“I called TeQuiera before I even called my mom,” Cora says. “I was so excited to have her back again as my nurse.”

Not surprisingly Cora entered the pregnancy with more trepidation than before, but she and TeQuiera worked together to prepare for any outcomes. However, neither of them could prepare for what happened next — the novel coronavirus pandemic. Just as Cora would reach full-term, COVID-19 cases would hit the first peak in spring 2020.

Not to be outdone by just a pandemic, Cora also underwent several medical interventions, such as regular injections to support her pregnancy given her prior miscarriage. TeQuiera was by her side throughout the process, helping her understand medical advice every step of the way.

“As we approached that five-month mark, she became preoccupied with negative thoughts,” says TeQuiera. “She started emotionally spiraling because she was worried she was going to have another miscarriage. I helped redirect her thoughts and comforted her the best I could.”

Cora values the support TeQuiera provided at that critical time.

“TeQuiera really helped me out along the way,” Cora says. “I am grateful for everything that she taught me, especially during those dark days when I was so fearful of another miscarriage.”

Cora’s doctors recommended an additional medical procedure five months before the due date called a cervical cerclage — or cervical stitch — to prevent another miscarriage. Cora remembers being terrified as she went under anesthesia, but she had TeQuiera for support.

“I kept assuring her that everything would be okay,” TeQuiera says. “I always tried to be positive for her.”

The surgery was successful and in April 2020, baby Nahla entered the world.

### **Growing Up During a Pandemic**

The birth went smoothly but with pandemic precautions in place Cora could only have one person in the hospital room with her at a time.

“It wasn’t what I expected. I wanted my mom to be there. It was hard,” Cora says.

A year later, Cora still feels the effects of the pandemic. “I can’t really take Nahla places. Other than a shopping trip here or there, there’s nowhere to go safely with an infant.”

“I’m a more confident mom now thanks to TeQuiera,” says Cora. “I was anxious taking care of Nahla at first, but now feel like I can do anything.”

Apart from the trials of pregnancy during a pandemic Cora was also unemployed, but TeQuiera helped her apply for jobs, and Cora is now a proud school bus driver in Fort Valley, Georgia.

The position’s flexible schedule allows Cora to arrange childcare with help from her in-laws, and she gets to spend most of her free time doing what she always dreamed of doing — doting over her daughter.

Nahla is now a one-year-old, bubbly, laughter-filled little girl who loves to babble at everyone. She’s just learning how to walk and loves to jump and crawl. “She is a pure joy to be around,” says Cora.

Looking back at the ups and downs of the last year, Cora is incredibly thankful to have TeQuiera in her life. “I was really nervous when I found out I was pregnant again. The support TeQuiera gave me was out of this world. I don’t know where I would be without her.”



Nahla is now one-year old and is a laughter-filled little girl.