

SUNN'S STORY

When asked about how she met her fiancé, Utah resident Sunn replied, “It was as if the universe was bringing us together.” Sunn is a musician and Faapepele had been a long-time follower of her music. She was 21 and had just recently got out of a tumultuous relationship when Faapepele sent her a message in spring 2021 asking to take her out.

They had been dating six months when she discovered she was pregnant. Sunn remembered, “I grabbed five digital pregnancy tests and they all said yes.” Next, Faapepele asked her to move in with him since Sunn was living an unsheltered lifestyle on the streets of Salt Lake City. Sunn recalled, “Faapepele said to me, ‘if you want to live a healthier life, your actions are not matching your goals.’”

Throughout her life, Sunn struggled with severe anxiety. She said, “I recently had been dealing with anxiety attacks. Even though I felt comfortable being homeless and wanted to stay on the streets, I knew I was safer living with Faapepele.”



NFP mom, Sunn, and her fiancé, Faapepele, say their twins, Tomasi and Rusall, always look forward to visits with their NFP nurse, Alina.

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At nine weeks pregnant, Sunn went in for her first prenatal appointment where she found out she was having twins. “I looked at the sonogram and there were two little circles in there. I thought, ‘No way!’ I told Faapepele and our bond got even stronger.”

That is also where Sunn learned about Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)®. She said, “I remember saying ‘if it costs money, I can’t do it – I don’t have any money.’ But it was a free program and I thought it was almost too good to be true!”

Sunn met her Salt Lake County Health Department’s Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) nurse, Alina, in December 2021 when she was 16 weeks pregnant with her twins. The anxiety of being around a new person made her feel guarded at first. Alina remembers, “I could tell it was hard for Sunn to trust me. I took my time and paced myself with her. One thing was clear, she had a desire and motivation to be a good mom and give her babies a better life than she experienced.”

Her pregnancy went well until 34 weeks when Sunn developed preeclampsia. Sunn remembers, “I went to the hospital because I was swelling. It was very serious and they told me I had to manage it before it gets worse.” Alina added, “I provided education on how important it was for her to check her blood pressure often. She was induced early because of the preeclampsia.”



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Sunn delivered Tomasi two minutes before Rusall via cesarian section on May 4, 2022. Both boys were fitted with oxygen masks in the NICU to help them breathe. Tomasi stayed at the hospital for over a month before being released home with a breathing mask. Sunn said, “I was feeling anxious and worried wanting everything to be ok.” Alina remembers, “Feeding a baby with an oxygen mask can be challenging. I helped her with the educational pieces as well as emotional support.”

Then, the hospital bills started arriving. Alina said, “We started small with enrolling her in Medicaid and some food assistance services.” Sunn remembers, “Alina basically taught me how to pay my bills. I had come from a place of not knowing how. I called each provider and updated them with my Medicaid information and my insurance covered them all!”

During this time, Sunn was still healing from the past trauma of being homeless and was transitioning into being a new mom. She said, “I still felt lost. While I was building a bond with my new babies, I was trying to put together who I am now and how to be better for my family.” Alina added, “My role was to support her with active listening. I explored ways she could cope with anxiety and encouraged her to try therapy.”

“I wanted to be heard so badly and Alina listened to me. She was an emotional mentor for me and her support helped me tremendously,” Sunn said. Alina responded, “Even on bad days I remind her how



NFP nurse Alina says that 11-month-old twins Tomasi and Rusall have a lot of energy during their visits.

amazing she is – being a mom of twins is a lot of work!”

Today, the twins are 11 months old and preparing to walk. “Tomasi is calm and quiet, but Rusall is wild and loud – you’ve got to watch out for him!” Sunn exclaimed. Faapepele attends most home visits with Alina and continues to support Sunn. Alina said, “I can tell that all the things they do as a couple are based on a desire to be good parents.”

Sunn and Faapepele keep their family stable by managing a budget and healthy communication. Sunn’s next goal is to earn a degree in psychology while continuing her career as a musician. She said, “I want to show my kids that it is never too late to chase your dreams.”