



Franki

"NEMOURS IS HOME FOR US"



FRANKI'S STORY

Eleven-year-old Franki is a little ball of fire. Nicknamed "Frank the Tank" by her parents, she has overcome many obstacles in her short life.

When Maria was pregnant with Franki, an ultrasound revealed that Franki's limbs were disproportionately short, indicating Down syndrome. Franki's parents were convinced that the diagnosis was wrong. They went on with their lives.

Then another ultrasound showed a problem with Franki's heart. A maternal-fetal medicine doctor immediately sent Maria for a consultation with a pediatric cardiologist. When testing showed fluid around Franki's heart and lungs, she was diagnosed with a condition called hydrops fetalis. Maria spent the rest of her pregnancy as an inpatient in her delivery hospital until doctors decided that it was safest for Franki to be delivered.

When Franki was born, the obstetrics team realized she had a missing connection between her rectum and anus, a condition called imperforate anus. They transferred Franki to the Nemours Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), where she had surgery at just 2 days old.

Franki spent most of her first two years in the hospital. In addition to Down syndrome and heart and lung problems, she has asthma and issues with her kidneys and liver. Franki also has a rare disorder called Moyamoya that affects the arteries supplying blood to her brain. The condition caused her to have ministrokes and ultimately required surgery.

Franki's family celebrated all her milestones — baptism, birthdays and holidays — at Nemours.

"Sadly, and not so sadly, Nemours is home to us," says Maria. "Franki would not be here without the care she receives at Nemours."

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