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Mom founds support group for ill infants

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for The Capital

Two days after giving birth at Anne Arundel Medical Center in September 2002, Christa Grim couldn't get her baby girl to stop crying. Finally, the Davidsonville resident called the nurse for help, and the newborn was soon rushed into the neonatal intensive care unit. Grim remembers, "we called the nurse who took her away, then she came back without Isabel and told me, 'she's really sick.'"

Isabel Grim was in and out of two hospitals until just before Thanksgiving that year as she was treated for a rare heart arrhythmia at University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore. She's now 2 and healthy, but the experience left her mother resolved to correct what she felt was a sub-par performance at AAMC.

"We weren't thrilled with how we were treated at the Anne Arundel Medical Center. They were unable to diagnose her, and we didn't get the emotional support. We were a victim of circumstance and fell through the cracks."

But rather than just complaining, Mrs. Grim has worked with the hospital to start "Isabel's Gift," an



organization to help parents of sick babies in the NICU at AAMC. Over 5200 children were born at the AAMC last year and approximately 10% of them required a visit to the NIC Unit, a division that specializes in premature babies and ones needing extra care.

Mrs. Grim is building a Web site that will provide resources for NICU visitors including personal stories and experiences from other parents who have been through the ordeal. She is also working on getting funding for "Comfort Bags" that will contain products to help ease the time spent in waiting and recovery rooms.