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Giving Dreams an Address

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Sarah and Adeline Phillips Photo Cathy Dausman

Sarah Phillips' due date wasn't for three weeks, so despite experiencing what she thought was false labor earlier that day, she and her mother shopped for baby clothing in Livermore. She expected to work the next day at her teaching job at Dublin's Kolb Elementary School. She was to accompany her third-grade class on a San Francisco field trip, but Mother Nature had other plans.

After putting her 2-year-old daughter to bed Phillips began having more contractions. Her doula,

reached by phone, suggested she might be dehydrated. Phillips chose coconut water to drink. "I chugged six," she said, adding she hasn't touched the beverage since. Then she took a bubble bath. Husband and wife tried to watch TV, but neither could concentrate. As she paced the house experiencing 30 second contractions every two minutes Phillip's thought was: "If this is false labor, how can I bear the real thing?"

They called her parents in to babysit daughter Nora and Phillips began to pack for the hospital. Suddenly everything changed, and Phillips knew they'd never make it. When her husband called 911, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District dispatcher Kelley Matulich answered. Fortunately for the Phillips family, Matulich had talked three or four other 911 callers through the home birth process over the past several months. No time to panic, no time even for pillows or blankets; Matt Phillips helped his wife and mother-to-be to the kitchen floor while Matulich talked him through the process. After only two pushes dark-haired, five-pound, seven-ounce Adeline arrived.

Con Fire Engine 15 and its crew arrived moments later, alongside Sarah's parents; the crew helped Matt cut the umbilical cord and the trio — mother, father and newborn baby — rode to Walnut Creek's Kaiser Permanente hospital. "It was strange going into Labor and Delivery with a baby already," Sarah says.

Contra Costa Public Health officer Jami Daviner says the county has registered 4,505 hospital births and 33 out-of-hospital births in 2017; of those four home births two were in Lafayette and one was in Moraga. Orinda had no home births for the same time period.

"We were blessed and fortunate," Sarah Phillips says, noting in the event of childbirth "the body really does what it's designed to do." Even big sister Nora did the right thing that night — she slept through the entire blessed event!

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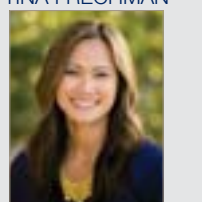
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