

Emma Leigh's Home Birth

Contributed by Kasey Garcia

I have to start Emma's story the week before she was born. A virus had been running through our six children the week before Emma's birth, however none of the kids were sick at the same time. I was awake every night for a week and I was exhausted, but thankful that I had not had the bug. How wrong I was, on April 16 th I came down with it. I had to stay close to home and to the restroom all day. That afternoon I noticed that I was having some contractions, but figured that the virus had just irritated things. I went to bed that night and FINALLY slept. I don't know if it was exhaustion or my body knowing I needed some rest for the work of labor. Really at that point I didn't care, I was just so happy to sleep. I woke up on April 17 th and had a tiny bit of bloody show. I called Beth (my midwife) just to let her know. I was also having contractions that were very mild and not at all regular. I decided to just do my normal things. I watched Chris and the kids play croquet out in the back yard. I helped prepare the bar-b-que meat for Chris to throw on the pit. The contractions didn't seem to be increasing in strength or be coming closer together. I put in another call to Beth to keep her updated, she said she would be happy to check me out if I wanted to come by later that evening.

Once we got the bar-b-que going I decided to take a shower, it turned into a bath and felt really relaxing. When I got out I thought that I might have Beth check me before it got to late. I called her and she said to come over. I drove over with our 11 yr old daughter Krissy and our 1 yr old son Rocco. Beth checked me and began laughing, she said I was between 6 and 7 cm dilated! WHAT?! I was a little shocked to say the least, I certainly didn't feel like I was in labor!! Beth told me to go straight home and to show Krissy how to call her in case my water broke on the way home. She said she would be on her way over as soon as she could change her clothes. I honestly don't think either one of us were expecting this to be the real deal! I called Chris and told him that we were having the baby, I was indeed in labor. He was just as shocked as I was. When I got home he had the kids getting everything prepared. They set up the card table for all Beth's supplies, made up the bed, got all my birth supplies out, and were straightening up. Beth arrived shortly after and Krissy and our son Chris helped her unload her car. I was noticing that the contractions were increasing in strength now, but they really weren't uncomfortable. Jessica (Beth's daughter and assistant) arrived and shortly after Mercy (an apprentice). We all sat around enjoying each other's company. We laughed so much and we were really having fun. Everyone enjoyed the bar-b-que that Chris had made earlier (except me, I was already to the point that I didn't really want to eat). I don't think I have enjoyed myself that much in a long time. It reminded me of sleepovers that you have when you are in junior high school when you stay up all night with your friends, laughing and talking. At some point Beth checked me at my request to find that I had not dilated any more, but that the baby was lower. She offered to break my water (at that point I would have said yes), but Jessica didn't feel right about it so we waited. More time passed and the contractions were beginning to hurt and things didn't seem so much fun anymore. I couldn't sit or lie down. The only position that I could handle the contractions in was standing leaning slightly forward rocking my hips back and forth. Somewhere in there I had asked Beth to check me again. This time I was lying flat on my back and Beth found that I was only about 5 cm dilated when in that position. WHAT??? That was disappointing, I really thought that I was getting close to pushing, I had even felt a little shaky and nauseated. Beth encouraged me to stay standing or on hands and knees. She was pretty sure that the baby was just trying to get in a good position and when that happened things would move quickly. By then it was late, probably 11:00 pm or so. Mercy had to leave to get some rest for work in the morning. Beth, Jessica and I were all exhausted. Jessica found a blanket and pillow and took a nap on the couch. Beth helped pile up blankets and pillows on the bed for me to lie down on and still be in a little bit of an upright position. Beth tried to rest on the other bed that was in the room. Chris had fallen asleep in the living room with the kids. I was wishing I could have that little lull between transition and pushing that you hear some women have, just a little time to rest, but it didn't happen. All of the sudden a huge contraction hit and I started moaning, Beth came over and put her arm around me and I cried. I just wanted it to be over with. I told Beth I couldn't do this anymore and I didn't WANT to do it anymore. As soon as those words were out of my mouth I had this incredible urge to get out of bed. I jumped up, took about 4 steps and my water broke. WOW! It was a strange feeling, there wasn't much but I knew it was my water, I felt a little popping sensation when it happened. Jessica heard me tell Beth and she was up from her nap. How do midwives do that? Asleep one second and wide awake the next. I asked Beth to wake Chris for me. From there it seemed like things happened fairly quickly. I still did not feel comfortable sitting, so I was still standing and pacing around. Beth checked me again, there was still a little cervix there. I felt some small urges to push, but for some reason I was just not ready, maybe I was a little scared too. I knew I didn't want to be on my back. I even asked Beth if she could deliver with me standing up, her answer "YES". The urges to push were getting stronger, but pushing while standing didn't seem appealing either. Beth suggested I try hands and knees. Really this was the most comfortable position for me. I began pushing, just lightly at first, the fear was still there for me. It felt like Beth was holding back my cervix while the baby's head was coming through. I asked at one point if the head was past the cervix and it wasn't. That gave me more motivation to push harder. All of the sudden I could feel her head stretching me and I felt her coming out. With my other babies I could feel when the head popped out, it really felt like a pop, but I didn't have that with Emma. After her head was out Beth said there was a cord and I felt her move it over Emma's head. Then I was pushing again, but the baby would not budge. Beth and Jessica both were telling me to push and I could feel Beth trying to get the baby out. Chris climbed up on the bed and lifted me up a little and I was pushing with everything I had. I couldn't even tell if I was having a contraction or not. I heard Beth ask the Lord for help getting the baby out. I could hear in her voice that the situation was serious and I kept pushing. Beth was able to bring out Emma's arm and finally she

was born. I stayed on my hands and knees for a few seconds, I think I was just stunned. I opened my eyes to see blood, I had pushed so hard my nose was bleeding! I finally turned around to see that we had a daughter. Emma Leigh was born on April 18 th at 1:49 am. Beth and Jessica were working on Emma. She didn't want to get started. They were rubbing on her and Jessica said she did a couple of chest compressions. They had to use the oxygen and ambi bag on her. Then suddenly her eyes opened and we all knew she was going to be fine. She made a little noise and Beth handed her to me. I never had any doubt that Beth and Jessica could handle the situation, they were wonderful. The cord was already white and Chris cut it. Emma woke up a little more and wanted to nurse. I don't think I have seen a baby be so interested in nursing so intensely. I delivered the placenta and Beth made our herbal bath. It felt wonderful as I remember from my 3yr old daughter Elsa's birth. I nursed Emma in the tub as that was the only thing she had on her mind. When we got out the bed had clean sheets and most everything was cleaned up and out of the way. Jessica did Emma's newborn exam and once again, just like with my last 2 babies when we guessed weight, Daddy was exactly right (Beth was too). Emma weighed 10 pounds and 2 ounces, she was 20 inches long. And mom was very glad to finally get some sleep!

Emma Leigh (6 weeks old) and Beth Overton

Beth Overton holding Elsa Anne (right) and Emma Leigh (left)

Beth Overton with all of seven of Kasey's children.

This picture was taken at Emma's 6 week check-up.