Bereaved Father learns to wheel chair race for this year's London Marathon in memory of baby son

Thursday 14 April, 2016

On 24 April 2016 bereaved father, Gary Cooper, will be hitting the streets of the capital in this year's Virgin Money London Marathon as part of Team Sands.

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, works to support families devastated by the death of a baby before, during, or shortly after birth, and improve the care they receive as well as promoting research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives.

On the 12th April 2013 Gary's wife gave birth to a beautiful baby boy named Finlay Darwin Cooper. Twenty eight hours later he died in his sleep completely unexpectedly and without any explanation. The coroner later ruled that he had died from Sudden Unexplained Early Neonatal Death which is a form of Sudden Infant Death syndrome (cot death).

After Finlay's death, Gary wanted to do something positive in his memory and complete the London Marathon in aid of both Sands and The Lullaby Trust (which supports research into SIDs as well as supporting parents).

Gary said:

“I have chosen to do this for Sands because they have been a great help to my wife and I since the death of our son. The one to one support offered by one of the charity's local support Groups was invaluable to us. "

In 2003 he had a life changing accident at work which resulted in a spinal cord injury and permanent paralysis from the chest down. He was in hospital for 10 months and had to completely change his life.

“This challenge turned out to be more difficult than I first imagined it would be. In order to enter the London Marathon I needed to obtain a racing wheelchair, learn how to use it (which is a completely different thing to pushing a normal wheelchair) and complete a half marathon in 1 hour and 15 minutes to be able to even enter!! I've now been training for over two years. Although I had 5 months off in the first year due to breaking my leg in three places whilst training!" said Gary.

Gary and his wife had a baby girl in August 2015. Daisy Violet Cooper will be there on the day to cheer her dad on.

Sands relies on the generosity of fundraisers and supporter to continue their vital work.

Stillbirth and neonatal death are not rare events. In 2014 around 5,600 babies died just before, during or soon after birth shattering the lives of parents, family and friends and the health care professionals who cared for them.If you would like to support Gary in his London Marathon attempt then please visit http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/GaryCooperWheelchairRacer

To find out more about Sands please visit: www.uk-sands.org.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Gary Cooper is available for interview.

For more information, please contact Natalie Cooper, Sands Press & PR Officer, on 0203 598 1959, e: Natalie.cooper@uk-sands.org.

About Sands:

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was established by bereaved parents in 1978.

Sands supports anyone affected by the death of a baby; works in partnership with health professionals to

Media:





Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Health :: Leisure & Hobbies :: Men's Interest :: Opinion Article :: Women & Beauty ::

Scan Me:

improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and promotes and funds research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives.

Sands is a national organisation, with over 100 regional support groups across the UK. Further information can be found at www.uk-sands.org.

Company Contact:

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity

E. natalie.cooper@uk-sands.org
W. https://www.uk-sands.org/

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.media-centre.pressat.co.uk