Dad and his colleagues run to thank charity which helped his premature twins

Monday 20 July, 2015

An Essex Dad and his colleagues ran 5km to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust, which supported his family whilst his premature twins, Amber and Megan, were in hospital.

Dan Hobbs, aged 30, and his colleagues from McLagan took part in the JP Morgan Corporate Challenge on Thursday 9th July in Battersea Park, London, raising an incredible £1,140 for the charity.

Dan is running in support of The Sick Children's Trust after the charity helped him when Amber and Megan were born early at 26 weeks, weighing just 1lb 12oz and 1lb 6oz respectively. The twins were immediately transferred to The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge, over an hour away from where Dan and his partner, Kerry, live.

At just six days old, both the twins had life-saving bowel surgery to fix a spontaneous perforation of the small bowel. After 17 weeks, the twins were able to go home for the first time.

Dan and Kerry were able to stay close to their twins because of Chestnut House, a 'Home from Home' provided by The Sick Children's Trust. The charity provides free, high-quality 'Home from Home' accommodation and support for families who have sick children in hospital. Chestnut is located a lift ride away from Amber and Megan's intensive care unit.

Unfortunately, ten weeks after returning home, Amber took a turn for the worse and was rushed to Great Ormond Street Hospital after the scar tissue from her earlier surgery became wrapped around part of her small bowel and its main blood vessel.

Dan and Kerry were devastated to be told that Amber had less than a 50% chance of survival and, at best, would have to have her small bowel removed. This would mean being fed nutrients through a tube until she was old enough to be considered for a transplant.

In one operation, surgeons massaged the previously trapped blood vessel before Amber was put on medication to help break up any clots in her blood. This came with the worrying risk of causing bleeding elsewhere in her body, but was seen as the only option to help her survive.

Then the time came for Amber's final operation to remove the damaged small bowel. She was rushed to theatre and Dan and Kerry anxiously waited for news. When they received a phone call just an hour into Amber's three-hour surgery, they feared the worse.

But it was good news. Despite her poor prognosis, surgeons were amazed to discover that Amber's bowel was now healthy and no longer needed removing. From having just a 50% chance of survival, Amber had made a miracle recovery and was the talk of Great Ormond Street Hospital.

After such a difficult start to life, Amber is now recovering well and Dan and Kerry are planning their wedding.

Dan says: "It's impossible to imagine the shock you feel when you find out that your babies are sick and we lived an hour away from the hospital which added to our stress. But having somewhere to stay nearby allowed us to be with our baby girls and meant that we weren't exhausted from travelling every day. After the stress of being in the wards all day, Chestnut House gave us some form of normality, we were able to have a decent meal, a hot shower and a comfortable bed to sleep in, before going back to the hospital in the morning."

"There were four or five other couples at the house at the same time who we are hoping to stay in touch with. It was really helpful to have other people there to talk to who were going through a similar experience"

Abigail Abdel-aal, Chestnut House Manager says: "We're delighted that Amber and Megan are doing well and thrilled that Dan has thought of us for the race. We are funded entirely by voluntary income so the more raised by Dan will be invaluable in continuing to help families during a difficult time in their lives."

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