

Media Release

Oscar's Survival Inspires Mum's and Bub's Cafe

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Lauren Cheney has many reasons to be celebrating her son Oscar's first birthday.

Oscar survived five surgeries in utero after developing a rare (1 in 15,000 births) condition that caused a large amount of fluid to build up around his lungs, called Hydrops Fetalis. Oscar's birthday has also timed with the opening of his mother's business in Churchlands, the Little Love Club café and play centre, a business aimed at giving back to the people who helped Oscar to survive.

Little Love Club is an interactive play studio that caters towards mums and carers of children under the age of 5 with play based educational classes, a casual drop-in play centre, coffee, treats and unique hand crafted giftware. A portion of their profits will go directly to the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF), the research centre based at King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH), where Lauren delivered Oscar.

Lauren said, "I am so thankful to the staff at KEMH for all they did to save Oscar. He was diagnosed with Hydrops when I was 26 weeks pregnant and had five surgeries in utero over nine weeks. It was terrifying as I didn't know if he would survive".

After being delivered via caesarean section at 35 weeks gestation, Oscar spent five weeks in intensive care where he had multiple drains put into his lungs and doctors sought a reason for his condition. "Oscar was recovering so well that we came home after five weeks, but shortly after we rushed him into back to hospital after he stopped breathing one night", said Lauren.

"We spent a further three weeks in Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) with Oscar having X-rays and tests to find the cause of his Hydrops. At six months of age Oscar was diagnosed with a very rare lung condition called Lymphangiectasia", said Lauren. Oscar is now used as a case study at the University of Western Australia (UWA) to help medical students learn about this rare condition.

"It has been a very trying, but rewarding year, and Oscar still sees the Immunology, Speech and Respiratory team at PMH", said Lauren. "Long-term though, we believe he will live a normal life".

WIRF began a research initiative in 2007 called the Fetal Futures Program to assess the long-term outcomes of children born at KEMH with recognised problems in fetal life. Maternal fetal specialist and obstetrician, Professor Jan Dickinson who leads the Fetal Futures research, said, "the Fetal Futures Program aims to provide evidence, and subsequently reassurance, for improved ways of dealing with prenatal conditions, and the long term impact they may have on a child's life". Further information on the studies can be found on WIRF's website, www.wirf.com.au/research-studies

Lauren said "I want businesses to see that they too can support a charity and flourish at the same time. We should all be doing whatever we can to help in any way and I want to prove that a commercial business can operate and support a foundation too".

The Little Love Club is now open from 8am-1pm Monday-Friday and Saturday (8am - 11am), in Selby st, Churchlands. More information can be found on their website; www.littleloveclub.com.au

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