

Indy & Aurelia – Our Little Treasures

Written by Dad James Oliver

I loved the Royal Melbourne Show as a kid, so when our twins were born more than fourteen weeks early and a cavalcade of pediatricians and nurses began describing a rollercoaster journey, I was ready for a thrill raising, adrenaline pumping, heart palpitating journey that would be over in no time and have me begging for more. It was thrilling, it was adrenaline pumping and there were heart palpitations, but in a way no one could ever prepare you for. It was more like riding a bike with flat tyres down a steep corrugated mountain track.

There was very little warning that our identical twin girls would be born extremely premature at 25 weeks. What followed was 121 days of making the daily journey to the Royal Women's Hospital, while trying to balance the commitments of work and older children.

These challenges seemed minuscule in comparison to the battle Indiana (born 695 grams) and Aurelia (born 910 grams) were facing on a daily basis. We soon learnt terms like ventilator, intubation, extubation, CPAP, high flow, low flow, and many others terms that describe the progression from life support to breathing unaided. Both twins battled "Chronic Lung Disease", Indy spending 3 months on home oxygen post discharge.

During their time in hospital they endured many common issues suffered by premature babies, their battle for life was a long and tough one. Both were also diagnosed with a patent ductus arterios (PDA) and an atrium septal defect (ASD). Fortunately Aurelia's conditions are smaller & expected to heal over. Indy on the other hand, in early September underwent heart surgery to close the PDA. Early on we learnt the art of celebrating very small

achievements, each little celebration giving us hope.

My heart swells today as I look at my beautiful daughters now 10 months old, knowing the road they have travelled

has been a far greater struggle than my whole life experience. Indiana, her cheeky smile is rarely more than a "peek-a-boo" away. Aurelia, fighting for her share of attention voices her feelings regularly as she shows why she is twin one.

We'll now move our focus to their development, a restricting ASD and offering our support to those who might benefit from our experience as preemie parents. Ronald McDonald house and the Life's Little Treasures Foundation, which supports families of premature babies, are two organisations that provided us with much needed support and you can be sure that as the opportunities arise we will be contributing back to these fantastic groups.



November is Premies Month

The Life's Little Treasures Foundation's charity Walk/Fun Run is on Sunday 14th November 2010
See our Community Page for more info.