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IN SUMMER'S MEMORY

STEPHANIE Lloyd and daughter Harper will remember Harper's twin, Summer, when they take part in the Walk for Prens in Melbourne this Sunday. Summer was five weeks old when she passed away last year.

Stephanie, partner Chris Crabb, and their daughter Harper will be joined by other Wangaratta residents in their 'Summer's Legacy' team in Sunday's walk.

PHOTO: Mel Guy

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Mother's love never wanes



BY SIMONE KERWIN
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“I just don’t want Summer to be forgotten.” A mum’s love put simply and passionately explains just what is motivating Wangaratta’s Stephanie Lloyd to take part in this Sunday’s Walk for Prens in Melbourne.

Conducted by the Life’s Little Treasures Foundation, the walk around Albert Park Lake aims to

celebrate the lives of premature or sick babies, while raising funds to provide vital services for families in need of support.

It’s a cause close to the hearts of Stephanie and partner Chris Crabb, who lost one of their premature twin girls in April last year, and will tackle the walk in a team named Summer’s Legacy in her honour.

Summer and her twin sister

Harper arrived 18 months ago at the Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg, after complications with Stephanie’s pregnancy forced her to relocate from Wangaratta for delivery.

“We found out at our eight week scan that we were having twins, and we were so excited from the start,” Stephanie said.

“Then at 12 weeks, we discov-



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ered that Summer had restricted growth, and was measuring a lot smaller than Harper...we were told Summer probably wouldn't make it.

"I developed pre-eclampsia as well, and Summer's placenta didn't develop as it should have, so it pretty much failed on her.

"We were referred to the Mercy from 22 weeks, where the girls could be delivered as early as 24 weeks, as long as Summer was over 500 grams; they ended up being delivered at 30 weeks and six days."

Harper weighed 1554 grams at birth, while Summer came in at just 596 grams, the weight of a 24 week gestation baby, and both required neonatal intensive care.

"I didn't get to see the girls for the first two days of their lives, and I didn't like being away from them," Stephanie said.

"Then it was a juggling act between the two girls, as I was expressing milk for them, but I thought, 'I have a job to do, I just have to concentrate on feeding them'.

"Everything was smooth sailing, and we thought we were completely out of the woods, because the doctors said if anything happened, it would happen in the first few days; we thought we were so lucky and we were so grateful."

Then, five weeks after the girls arrived, Summer developed an aggressive stomach infection called necrotising enterocolitis.

"The doctors said not all babies survived the infection, but it could be cleared up with anti-biotics, or she may need

surgery," Stephanie said.

"I don't know if I was in denial, but I just thought it was going to work."

But when the family returned to hospital the following day, Mother's Day, they were told Summer's lung had collapsed and

she didn't have much time.

"We spent time all together, Chris and I, our parents and my sister, and all took turns holding Summer," Stephanie said.

Harper was flown back to Northeast Health Wangaratta the day after Summer passed away, so the family could be surrounded by support as they nourished Harper and grieved for Summer.

Summer still holds a strong presence in the family, with Harper directing a 'Good morning' and 'Good night' to her photo every day, and an angel bear featuring her name taking pride of place in the family home.

"I just want people to know about her," Stephanie said.

And what better way to celebrate Summer's life, and assist other families confronted by similar experiences, than by walking proudly with family and friends in the Walk for Prems?

"If I can help someone else by making sure they have the support, resources and information they need, then it's worth it," Stephanie said.

"There are lots of families from regional areas who have to relocate to the city when this happens, and the work of Life's Little Treasures really does make a difference, helping with some of the costs and providing support networks."

Up to 15 people will walk with Stephanie and Chris, and Harper of course, this Sunday, and the Summer's Legacy team has already raised more than \$2000.

• Anyone seeking more information about the event, or wishing to donate, can search Walk for Prems fundraiser – team Summer's Legacy on facebook, or visit www.walkforprems.org.au.

A donation of as little as \$10 can provide help for families caring for premature children.

walking in
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Summer

Family is



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If I can help someone else by making sure they have the support, resources and information they need, then it's worth it.

- STEPHANIE LLOYD



HITTING THE ROAD: Summer Crabb will be remembered by mum Stephanie Lloyd and sister Harper, 18 months, when they take part with family and friends in the 2018 Walk for Prems, in the Summer's Legacy team.

PHOTO: Mel Guy