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Walk so they can fight and survive

NICOLA BARTON

Every mother dreams of the first moment they get to hold their newborn after birth but for Penrith resident Paige Harty, complications forced her to wait 17 days until she had her chance.

In a hurry to enter the world, her two identical twin boys were born at 28 weeks and immediately rushed to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Nepean Hospital, where they stayed for the next nine weeks.

Born a tiny 1.4kg and just 32cm long, the boys were immediately put on life support due to their lungs not working on their own.

“Not knowing the outcome was numbing - just like my legs - I had to wait the longest five hours of my life to see my little guys,” Ms Harty said.

“Both boys had a blood and urine test done every 12 hours, it was heartbreaking watching these amazing, strong and tiny humans endure so much pain before they were meant to enter the world. As parents we felt hopeless.”

During this time, Ms Harty said the nursing staff and doctors were comforting and reassuring that everything would be

OK as well as offering support groups and answering any questions.

Now 16-months-old and 12kgs, the twins are happy, healthy growing babies.

This Sunday, Ms Harty will join thousands of other families to participate in the 2018 Walk for Prems event, which support the 48,000 premature babies that are born every year.

Ms Harty said she will be forever grateful for the work and dedication from nurses and surgeons that saved her boys' lives and allowed them to reunite their family.

“Without fundraisers like Walk for Prems, our boys may not be here with us today. We also thank our support network including NICU parents and our family for being there for us,” she said.

Over the past nine years the walk has raised over \$1.4 million for the Life's Little Treasures Foundation, with hopes to raise \$300,000 this year.

The event organisers said it's a way to raise money and support families, whilst also honouring those babies who have sadly passed away.

The walk will begin at 9.30am at The Village Green Area, Barwon Park Road, St Peters.

To register or donate, visit www.walkforprems.org.au



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The Harty family is supporting this year's Walk For Prems event. Photo: Melinda Jane