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Volume 1, Issue 1

Lifes Little Treasures Quarterly Newsletter



lifes little treasures

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President's Welcome

Welcome to our very first edition of Life's Little Treasures newsletter! I'm very excited to be a part of this new support group. Along with the other members, I have long felt the need for a group of parents such as ourselves to band together and help each other through the roller coaster ride that we all faced after our babies spent time in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and/or Special Care Nursery.

As many of you would know, this can be an intensely frightening and exhilarating time and for many, this might even be your first real long term exposure to the hospital environment and all that that it encompasses. Whilst you may be overjoyed at the birth of your special little treasure, there can be sadness at past losses, anxiety over the trauma of the birth, concern about your child's future development and health issues, distress at lengthy separations whilst your baby is in hospital and of course, heightened apprehensiveness about feeding and weight gain.

When my daughter was first born, I was so focused on her well being during her 11 weeks in hospital (you can read more about Abbie's story on page 4), that I think it's fair to say that I had a little 'mini meltdown' of sorts some months after she came home. I think it's also fair to say that this is common to a lot of parents of preemie babies and those who have spent time in hospital, but was not something that I was prepared for or even discovered until many more months down the track when I began to seek out other preemie parents on the Internet. By speaking with other parents I've now come to realise that my feelings of inadequacy and anxiety were entirely natural and even to be expected at some point. Of course, factor in the usual tiredness, hormonal fluctuations, stress, feeding issues and sleep deprivation that all new mothers feel, and it's not unusual that I felt like a ticking time bomb at times. Maybe if there had been a group like ours already in existence, I could have saved myself endless hours of worry and frustration about things that I now know are commonly faced by many parents such as us.

So whether you are a new parent currently negotiating the NICU/SCN rollercoaster, or your child is a former graduate of the NICU/SCN environment, I would encourage you to get on board and join with us as together we aim to offer support, encouragement & friendship for families of these very special babies. We have many exciting initiatives in the pipeline that you can read more about in this and future newsletters - it would be great to meet you and your little ones!



Introduction to the Group Members



VP: Allison Webb

Hi!! I am a mum of twins born at 26 weeks Zachary born 955grms and Elysse born 915grms. The twins are now 2 years old and thieving. My role in life's Little Treasures includes Coordinating monthly playgroups (everyone is welcome) and fundraising. Through our playgroup our aim is to give parents an opportunity to have a chat with other prem parents and provide support / friendship to each other once out of hospital. I am looking forward to being a part of a much needed group.

Treasurer: Robyn Singleton

Hi, I am a mum of a prem baby also. As the treasurer, my role is to ensure all the finances are kept on track for official and legal purposes. I look forward to working with this support group to make it a success.

Media and Communication: Parool Shah

I am mum of 2 children. My youngest Luke who is now 2 was born at 27 weeks weighing 915grams. As the media and communications person, I am involved in any activities which help to increase the awareness of LLT in the community. My immediate aims are to set up a quarterly newsletter and to produce packs which provide easy and practical information to help parents going through these difficult times. I am very excited to be part of this dynamic team and look forward to our group growing and filling a much needed role in the community.

The President: Rachel Waites

As President, I aim to coordinate and progress the many fantastic ideas that we have planned for the year ahead. I will also continue to liaise with the RWH regarding programs for new mums that we are hoping to commence soon. We cannot continue without the support and interest of new members, so I would encourage you to contact us if you would like to be a part of this group. We have much to offer but welcome suggestions and ideas as well, as this is as much a support group for 'older' preemie parents as it is for those with newborns! We hope that you find this newsletter informative and fun and that we've now inspired you to get in touch with us.

Secretary: Shusannah Morris



Hi, I'm the Group Secretary and mum to Molly-Rose, who was born at 26 weeks weighing 880grams. My main aims will be to keep a track of all the goings on at our meetings, making sure we do what we say we are going to!. Hopefully ensuring all the behind the scenes activities run smoothly, look for ways to increase awareness of the group, as well as take part in the morning teas and group fundraising projects. I'm very much looking forward to seeing our group grow and provide support to all those families out there who need a group like us.

Support Programs: Annemarie Hammon

I am a very proud mother of 3 children. My last child Hannah was born at 24weeks. She is now a happy, healthy 2 year old, received a cochlear implant 8 months ago. My main aim is to put together a support group for parents who are currently experiencing the roller-coaster ride of having a baby in NICU/SCN. Our aim is to set-up monthly morning teas in the parent's room on the 9th floor, RWH, where parents who currently have a child in NICU/SCN can talk to parents who have been through this experience. We also hope to set up a support program, where a parent can contact an ex NICU/SCN parent through their case manger, and speak to them one on one. Our aim is to offer support and friendship to those in need.

VISION & AIMS

Who We Are

We are a group of mothers who have experienced the roller coaster ride of N.I.C.U. & Special Care Nurseries, who would like to provide you with support and friendship.

Vision Statement

To improve the quality of life for NICU & Special Care premature and full term babies and their parents by providing support, encouragement & friendship from parents who have been through the process and understand what it is like.

Aims

- To introduce support programs which provide practical and emotional support to families and friends, who have babies that have spent time in intensive/special care nurseries.
- To provide easily accessible and relevant information for families.
- To offer continued assistance to families to ease the transition from hospital to home environment.
- To increase community awareness of the unique issues faced by families of these special babies.

Playgroups



We are delighted to inform our members that we are running a playgroup monthly on the first Friday of each month. We are also pleased to announce that we have forged a relationship with the Featherweights Club (which works with The Mercy Hospital) and as a result our members are also welcome to attend their playgroup which runs the third Tuesday of each month. Please see below and calendar of events on the next page for more details

LLT PLAYGROUP

Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: No 7 Mallee Court
Sunbury
Vic 3129

Tel no: 0437 254 360

FEATHERWEIGHT PLAYGROUP

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Craig Family Centre
7 Samarinda Avenue
Ashburton

Tel no: 0412 976224

Calendar of Events

July 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 10.30am-12.30pm LLT Playgroup	2
3	4	5	6 10.30am Morning Tea RWH	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 10am-12.00pm Featherweight Club Playgroup	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3 10.30am Morning Tea RWH	4	5 10.30am-12.30pm LLT playgroup	6
7	8	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 10am – 12pm Featherweight Club Playgroup	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Morning Tea at RWH



A member of Lifes Little Treasures visits the 9th Floor of the Royal Womens Hospital on the 1st Wednesday of each month (10.30am). Our aim for these morning teas is to speak to parents who currently have babies in NICU/SCN, and offer them help, advice and support. Most times we bring our babies back so that parents can see that they do grow up to be beautiful cheeky toddlers/children!!



Cook's Corner



Here is another delicious recipe to tantalize the tastebuds of your bubs and their friends at their next birthday party! It's a winner!!

Lemon Vanilla Biscuits

Ingredients

3 Eggs

125g butter

300ml sour cream

2 cups caster sugar

1 pkt Hoyts vanilla sugar (25g)

1 lemon rind

4 cup self raising flour

pure icing sugar

- Melt butter.
- Mix together the eggs, caster sugar, vanilla sugar and lemon rind.
- Add melted butter. Then add sour cream. Add 4 cups self raising flour. Mix with mixer.
- Cover with glad wrap and refrigerate overnight.
- Next day, pre-heat oven to 200degrees Celsius. Roll into balls and roll in icing sugar.
- Bake approx 10 mins, or until golden brown.

Makes about 50 biscuits. Delicious!

Happy Birthday!



Big birthday wishes to the following boys and girls who celebrated their 2nd birthday!

Hannah Byrne - 29/1

Molly-Rose Morris - 5/2

Luke Harrington – 27/2

Zac and Elysse Webb – 2/3

Abbie's Story

After a relatively non eventful pregnancy, my husband and I were eagerly looking forward to our routine 20 week ultrasound and then that evening, we were booked to do the tour of the Frances Perry House facilities. The ultrasound showed that I was already dilated nearly 2 cms and we were advised to check ourselves straight into the hospital without delay. We missed the hospital tour, but as one midwife joked, we were getting the 'comprehensive one-on-one' tour that night! I was placed in bed and my feet were raised and we anxiously waited for our obstetrician. I required a cervical suture a rather risky prospect when you are already dilated and then was placed on strict bed rest to wait. My OB said that I had an incompetent cervix, but could not explain why. We felt incredibly blessed as most women aren't diagnosed with this condition until they have had a number of late term miscarriages. Any subsequent pregnancies would now require a suture to be inserted around week 13 to 15.



After a number of false starts and scary times, our daughter Abbie May was born at 27 weeks by emergency caesarian birth on Friday 8 November 2002 at 7.27pm weighing 1.12 kilos or 2 pounds, 9 ounces. She was breathing on her own but required relatively high percentages of oxygen through CPAP. She was in NICU for nearly two weeks, but as she progressed she was quickly moved to FPH Special Care Nursery. Not long after that though, her umbilical stump became infected and she became very ill requiring blood transfusions and antibiotics. She gave us quite a scare, but was back to her usual 'wrigglebum' self in no time, and before we knew it, we were able to bring her home on 21 January, several weeks before her initial 7 Feb due date.



She came home with an apnea monitor and we quickly realised that after the noise and commotion of the SCN, she slept better if we left a TV on in the room at night, certainly not the case now! Abbie is now 2 and a half years old and those early days in the NICU and SCN seem like a fleeting memory from a time long ago. They were incredibly happy times and also, unbelievably frightening and isolating for us as we tried to navigate our way around the hospital routines and jargon. Abbie continues to thrive and cause mischief but we wouldn't have it any other way.





Subscription Details

(ABN 94 232 874 269)

(Please print in BLOCK Letters)

TITLE _____ FAMILY NAME _____

GIVEN NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POST CODE _____

TEL (H) _____ (B) _____

MOB _____ EMAIL _____

YOUR CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

BIRTH WEIGHT _____

(We will be using birth dates for our birthday corner, please cross this box if you do not wish for your child to be included)

(Subscription fee for 2005 is \$5 however the committee will review this on a yearly basis)

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Please send cheque payable to "Lifes Little Treasures Inc" to the address below.

**Lifes Little Treasures Inc
P O Box 476
Chadstone Centre RP
Vic 3148**

✂ _____ Cut along here _____ ✂

Response Form

We would like to inform our members that there is no obligation to be actively involved with the committee once you have subscribed to become a member. However we would be delighted if any of our members would like to be involved in any of the following areas below. If so, can you put a cross in the box next to the area you would like to be involved with and send it to us at the same address as above.

SUPPORT/MORNING TEA PROGRAAME FUNDRAISING MEDIA AND MARKETING



lifes little treasures

Lifes Little Treasures Inc

CONTACT ADDRESS

P O Box 476
Chadstone Centre RP
Vic 3148

Phone:
0437 254 360

E-Mail:

lifeslittle_treasures@yahoo.com.au

ABN: 94232874269

A Perfect Choice

Finally, God passes a name to an angel and smiles, "Give her a premature child."

The angel is curious. "Why this one, God? She's so happy." 'Exactly, smiles God, 'Could I give a premature child to a mother who does not know laughter? That would be cruel.' 'But has she the patience?' asks the angel.

'I don't want her to have too much patience or she will drown in a sea of self-pity and despair.

Once the shock and resentment wear off, she'll handle it. I watched her today. She has that feeling of self and independence that is so rare and so necessary in a mother' 'But lord, I don't think she even believes in you.'

God smiles. 'No matter, I can fix that. This one is perfect. She has just enough selfishness.'

The angel gasp, 'Selfishness? Is that a virtue?'

God nods. 'If she can't separate herself from the child occasionally, she'll never survive.

Yes, there is a woman whom I will bless with a child in a less perfect way. She doesn't realize it yet, but she will be envied. She will never consider a 'step' ordinary. When her child says 'Mama' for the first time, she will be present at a miracle and know it! She will never be alone. I will be at her side every minute of every day of her life because she is doing my work as surely as she is here by my side.'

'And what about her patron saint? Asks the angel, his pen poised in mid-air.

God smiles. 'A mirror will suffice.'