

The NICU Foundation Newsletter

December 2019



A warm welcome to our first ever newsletter. It has been an extremely exciting and eventful year for The NICU Foundation, and following our partnership with the South West Neonatal Network in April 2019, we have seen our small charity go from strength to strength. The Trustees and I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of people across the south west and beyond and we wanted to provide an update on our fundraising, some exciting news about what we have planned over the next few months as well as give a few special mentions. Enjoy.

Charley Maher, Chair of Trustees for The NICU Foundation

A Stay in Neonatal Care: An Animated Guide

As many of you may already know, earlier this year we launched our first ever animation, aimed at helping parents navigate the often unfamiliar environment of a neonatal unit. When we began this project, we knew that we wanted to create something that could support parents during an extremely emotional and uncertain time but without overwhelming them with information.

The last six months have been an extraordinary journey for our animation which has now received over 5,000 views. Earlier this year, the animation was also added to the vCreate system and now forms part of the parent welcome in over 65 units across the UK, with another 45 units planned by summer 2020. Most recently we were thrilled to find out that our animation had been accepted into the Charity Film Awards. Throughout November you may have seen social media posts asking for your support and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that got involved by voting and sharing. We find out if we have reached the next stage of voting in January 2020 and we can't wait to update you with our progress.

So what's next in the animated world? Well, we are thrilled to announce that during our most recent Trustee meeting, we have agreed the funding for our second animation! The current working title is "Your Journey Home", a guide to the hurdles new parents may face as they prepare to take their little one/s home. We are aiming to launch our second animation in April 2020 and I look forward to providing regular updates across our social media channels.



Donations

Since April 2019, we have seen a record amount of fundraising taking place with money raised by very generous NICU Foundation supporters, many of them parents and family members who have experienced time in a NICU. With the increase in donations, we were very quickly left in a position where we were looking for opportunities to spend money! As funding requests started to flood in, we were thrilled to start shopping and shipping out requested items to units stretching from Bath to Truro. These items ranged from breast pumps and milk warmers to iPads, DVD players and microwaves.

With the donations we received we were also able to completely re-vamp two parent rooms at Southmead Hospital, including a fresh coat of paint, new tables, chairs, appliances and a few home comforts. We were helped by a team of 12 volunteers from two local businesses, Pelican and water2business, who rolled up their sleeves and completely transformed these rooms into a place where parents could relax.

Fundraising

We couldn't have achieved any of the last six month's achievements without the generous donations made by our growing team of supporters. We wanted to take this opportunity to share an update on fundraising while also providing a few special mentions.

Quarterly Charity

We were thrilled to be chosen as a quarterly charity by a group of local businesses, Pelican, water2business and Flipper. Over the last three months the teams have been working incredibly hard to raise money for The NICU Foundation by running a variety of events such as dress down days, auctions and a very special 'Halloween Extravaganza'. We have loved receiving updates and photos throughout their journey. Although we do not find out the total amount raised until January 2020, during their last update, they confirmed that their current total was **£1,000!** A huge thank you to these amazing businesses, we can't wait to share the total!



Fundraising Events

We have seen a number of fundraising events taking place over the last few months, including Will Thomas who raised over **£300** by completing a half Marathon AND an Aquathlon. Definitely no easy feat!

We also saw a charity boxing event, with each participant raising money for a different charity. We were humbled to hear that Scott Wilkinson had chosen The NICU Foundation following the birth of his daughter Evie, who needed regular visits to the NICU during her first few months. Scott raised over **£600** during his campaign, every penny of which will be spent on support for parents and babies who are going through #LifeOnNICU.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank every single person who has organised a 'Facebook Fundraiser'. Over the last six months we have received a whopping **£17,000** of donations, some of these simply set up for birthdays, asking friends and family for donations instead of a

birthday card. This money has been spent on renovations, vital new equipment and has also helped to fund our new animation.

How can you help?

- Start a fundraising event on our official Virgin Money Giving page
- Set up a fundraising campaign or birthday fundraiser using Facebook
- Use our collection tins to raise funds during an event or at your place of work



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