

Lost son mum's teacher

Angela turns grief to funds for hospital

By SHEREE ECHLIN

FOR Angela Perry becoming a mother was the best experience of her life.

Sadly, it was an experience that was tinged with grief and loss.

When Angela, who lives at Bongaree, found out she was pregnant a week after her 34th birthday, she was over the moon.

It was a relatively normal pregnancy until the 27-week mark, when Angela experienced a placental abruption and was rushed to hospital for an emergency caesarean.

"It was scary and unexpected," Angela said.

"It was sudden: I was at home on a Saturday night watching TV in my PJs and I started having severe abdominal pain and then I went straight to hospital."

Noah Craig Markey was born on January 23 this year but after arriving in traumatic circumstances, Angela was told by staff at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, the prognosis wasn't good.

"One of the neonatal intensive doctors spoke to me and explained what had happened. They said the placenta had come away, Noah was deprived of oxygen and had to be resuscitated," she said.

"The doctor said the lack of oxygen to his brain had caused a lot of problems and they told me there was a very good chance he could die.

"My whole world just crumbled."

Noah spent six days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, with Angela spending every spare moment she could at his side.

"I got to hold him and feed him, change his nappies, it was lovely and special," Angela said with a smile.

On January 28, Angela made the difficult decision to switch



REMEMBERING HIM: Angela Perry sits at her son, Noah Craig Markey's, memorial bench. Photo: Vicki Wood/SBR021111son3

off the machines that were keeping her precious son alive.

"I knew when I walked in to the nursery that morning things weren't right," Angela said.

"I looked at Noah and he looked distressed - it broke my heart. As his mum, I had to step up and say no more - it was hard but a decision I had to make."

Despite experiencing heartbreak and having to say goodbye to her son, Angela couldn't speak more highly of the team at the NICU at the hospital and now she wants to give something back.

"The nurses were great and they allowed me to be involved in Noah's care," she said. "As a nurse myself, I've never come across such a team of profes-

sional, compassionate people. How they do that job, I don't know: it must be just as hard for them as it is for the family."

Angela is busy working to fundraise for the RBWH Foundation.

She talks about holding a raffle to raise money for the NICU, with first prize a trip to her home town of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia.

"I like the thought that mine and Noah's experience could help another family," Angela said. "I cringe when I hear about a family losing a baby - if I can help another family, through my fundraising, not have to go through that loss, I've achieved my goal."

But Angela hasn't stopped there. She has also created a

fundraising page at www.go-fundraise.com.au/page/NoahCraig. She is also collecting caps for Paul's Collect A Cap, with 10 cents for every cap going to the foundation.

And she received a community grant from Kedron Wavell Services Club, which has gone to Noah's trust account for the hospital.

"I even had a lady in Kalgoorlie donate \$1000 after a triathlon; and a miner is shaving his beard, which he has had for 20 years, with his fellow workers

"People want to help: they just have to be told how..."

sponsoring him," she said. "It's really opened my eyes that people want to help: they just have to be told how."

"There's also this beautiful woman in Mackay, who is knitting quilts and beanies for the NICU - it's just amazing what people want to do."

Angela would also like to thank Cornett's IGA at Bongaree for their support, letting her leave a donation box on the front counter, which has already been filled a couple of times, by generous customers.

Angela is a bubbly person by nature but tears welled in her eyes as she contemplated Noah's approaching first birthday.

"It will be hard because we will be celebrating a day, which he should be here for," she said. "Not a day goes by I don't think about him."

And although the grief is still raw, Angela is thinking about another baby.

"I want to be a mother, having Noah reaffirmed that for me," she said.

"The risk is there again to have the same problem, but it's a risk I'm prepared to take. Noah only had a short time on this earth but he's been my greatest teacher," she said. "I've learnt so much about myself."

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