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“Losing a child is never easy. But we are so grateful for the beautiful baby boy that we have,” says Travis Rose, here with son Sky, now 18 months, and wife Christine Chan. Photo: Tiffany Cooper.

Miracle on East Columbia Street

RCH CHAMPIONS TO SAVE THE SMALLEST OF THE SMALL

Christine Chan, 37, of Coquitlam, was pregnant with identical twins when her water broke. Her husband Travis drove her to Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) on February 7, 2012, where Christine was admitted and stabilised.

“I was afraid and confused,” said the mother of five. “All my life I had wanted to have identical twins. This was a dream come true, babies number five and six, together.” The twins were at 23 weeks gestation and the high-risk maternity team at RCH wanted to prolong the pregnancy for as long as possible to give the twins their best chance at life.

On February 29, Christine’s worst fears happened.

At 26 weeks, an unstable heartbeat from one of the twins precipitated an immediate caesarean section. Sadly, the twin they named Ocean (1,176 grams) was stillborn. The baby’s sac had prematurely broken, making him vulnerable to infection. Christine and Travis were devastated by the news. “Even though my heart was broken I felt supported and cared for by the nurses. They encouraged me to stay strong for my four children at home who were waiting for me to take care of them. They reminded me that I had to be there for Sky, my tiny, new baby.”

Sky (1,076 grams) was cared for in the RCH Variety Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for 137 days. He was supported by a nasal CPAP machine that assisted his breathing by puffing up his lungs. On his second day he had some lung collapse so required a High Frequency

Oscillator Ventilation, or breathing tube. “This provides tiny volumes of breath and is thought of as a gentler way of treating a baby,” explains RCH Neonatologist-Pediatrician Dr. John O’Toole. “This is a very difficult time for a parent. The little baby is attached to a lot of equipment. Christine was very anxious about her baby and we were all concerned about her. She had to grieve the loss of Ocean and look after her surviving child,” says O’Toole.

On June 21, 2012, Sky went home to live with his one brother, three sisters and his overjoyed mother and father. “Losing a child is never easy. But we are so grateful for the beautiful baby boy that we have. The physicians and nurses at Royal Columbian helped us through a difficult time. Without them, we would not have been able to celebrate Sky’s homecoming,” says Travis. ■

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