

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Catherine Butterfield, Media and Communications Consultant, Mercy Health

Date: 27 May, 2021

Generous family helps to preserve precious memories

When the unthinkable happened and the Laird family lost their baby girl to stillbirth in 2012, the family took many photos with baby Chloe to ensure their precious memories with her were preserved.

The images are so treasured by the Lairds that they wanted to ensure every family grieving the loss of a baby could have access to photography during their darkest hours, so they too could capture treasured memories with their babies.

In a generous gesture, Chloe's dad, Cameron, raised funds to purchase a camera kit through the Heartfelt Foundation, a volunteer organisation of photographers dedicated to giving the gift of photographic memories to families who have experienced stillbirth or have children with serious or life threatening illness.

"After Chloe was born, we were grieving and in shock and probably wouldn't have thought to have taken pictures," Cameron said. "But we have a friend who works for Heartfelt, and she came to the hospital to take some photos for us.

"The photos help us to keep our precious memories of Chloe. We really treasure them and know how important they are to our family so we wanted to make sure that other people who find themselves in a situation like ours also have the chance to capture memories."

After raising the funds for the camera kit via a sponsored walk, Cameron and Elisa, and their 11-year-old son Tyler, presented the kit to staff at Mercy Health's Mercy Hospital for Women last week.

"Although it might not be something that people think they want at the time, down the track, most families are really grateful to have these physical memories," Elisa said.

"We hope that families can use this camera kit to take picture with their babies in the event that a Heartfelt photographer can't be there. I know how much our photos mean to us so I hope we can give that to other families like ours and that the memories of their babies can live on."

The donated camera is a beautiful tribute to baby Chloe, and is inscribed with the message: 'In loving memory of Chloe Laird – 7th July 2012. Forever in our hearts. Love always Dad, Mum and your Big Brother'.

Mercy Hospital for Women Birth Suites Nurse Unit Manager Nadia Bardien thanked the Laird family for their bravery and generosity of spirit.

"We are very grateful to receive this gift from the Lairds and Heartfelt," she said. "We know how important these photos are to bereaved families, whether that is immediate or sometime in the future.

We can't thank this beautiful and brave family enough for sharing their story and helping other families in similar situations to preserve the memories of their lost babies."

Mercy Perinatal is a centre of excellence in clinical care, education and research based at the Mercy Hospital for Women in Melbourne. Mercy Perinatal is internationally recognised as a leader in research into stillbirth, preeclampsia and fetal growth restriction.

Contact Mercy Health Foundation if you would like to donate and help Mercy Perinatal to bring mothers and their babies safely home.

mercyhealthfoundation.org.au

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