

PRESS RELEASE

May 2011

DUNGANNON COUPLE CALL ON MOTORCYCLISTS TO GET ON THEIR BIKES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND STILLBIRTH AND NEONATAL DEATH CHARITY

When Mark and Melissa Loe's baby daughter tragically died in 2009, the couple sought help from Northern Ireland's stillbirth and neonatal death charity, Sands. Two years on, and to highlight Sands' Awareness Month in June, they want to give something back to the charity which they say helped them through their darkest days.

To raise funds for Sands and keep their daughter Amy's memory alive, the couple are calling on all keen motorcyclists to join in a fundraising 'motorcycle run' on Sunday 5 June, from Granville, Dungannon, to Portrush. It is the second time the couple have organised the run, and the success of last year's event – which saw 76 bikes involved and raised £1000 for Sands - has spurred them on to do it all again.

"We want as many motorcyclists as possible to take part this year," says Melissa, "and of course if people want to show their support and wave them on as they ride by that would be fantastic.

"When Amy died we were able to turn to Sands for help and comfort, and it was such a great support to Mark and I meeting people who had been through the same tragedy as us as we felt we were not alone in our grief. It means so much to us to be able to do something not only to say thank you to Sands, but to also keep Amy's memory alive."

The motorcyclists will leave Granville car park at 11.30am, and will have two rest stops along the 60 mile route. Mark will be one of the many motorcyclists taking part on the day, and Melissa will be waving him on with their other children Jack, 7, Dylan, 6, Katie, 3, and Ben, 5 months.

Melissa is hoping to set up a local support group in the near future to help anyone affected by the death of a baby.

Anyone who would like to take part in the event should contact Melissa Loe on 07922 620843.

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Note to editors:

For more information, contact Lisa Wardle, Sands press officer, e:lisa.wardle@uk-sands.org. t:07554 454309.

Key Information about Sands:

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was established by bereaved parents in 1978 and obtained charity status in 1981. Sands core aims are to:

- Support anyone affected by the death of a baby;
- To work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and
- To promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives

Sands is a national organisation, with over 100 regional support groups across the UK.
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