

**17 August 2012**

**Over 70 people to walk across Forth Bridge to Raise Funds for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, in memory of Leo Baird.**

Sunday 2nd September will see over 70 people join together to undertake a sponsored walk across the Forth Bridge, in memory of stillborn Leo Baird and to raise funds for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity.

The sponsored walk is being organised by Mrs Levi Montgomery, of Cowdenbeath, and friend to Leo's parents, Vicki & Robin Baird. Leo was stillborn on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Mrs Montgomery takes up the story:

'Our first child, Casey, was born just a few weeks prior to the sad news that Leo had tragically died. This made me realise how lucky we were to have Casey and the terribly devastating news spurred me into action and to arrange the sponsored walk.

'Until baby Leo was stillborn I was completely unaware that every day in the UK 17 families are devastated as their much awaited baby is either stillborn or dies shortly after birth. These are such terrible statistics I hope that the money we raise will help Sands continue the great work they do supporting bereaved families, as well as help fund much needed research into why so many babies die every day.'

The day will begin with everyone meeting at The Queensferry Lodge from 12pm then the sponsored walk will commence at 1pm. Everyone is then returning to the hotel after the walk for refreshments and a balloon race.

Levi adds: 'I have been overwhelmed by how many people have signed up to join us walk the mile and half across the bridge in memory of Leo. I would also like to say a huge thank you to Vicki & Robin for allowing me to assist them in their fundraising, everyone who has signed up to help and everyone at The Queensferry Lodge for their generosity and support of our event. We're all hoping our efforts raise lots of money for Sands and that it won't be too windy whilst we're crossing the bridge.'

To find out more about the walk or to donate, please visit [www.justgiving.com/LeviMonty-ForLeo](http://www.justgiving.com/LeviMonty-ForLeo)

To find out more about Sands, please visit: [www.uk-sands-org.uk](http://www.uk-sands-org.uk)

**ENDS**

For further information, please contact:

Lyn Peters – 0845 6520 442

or

Lisa Wardle – 07554 454309

Sands Helpline: 0207 436 5881

Sands Office: 0207 436 7940

Web: [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)

E mail: [info@uk-sands.org](mailto:info@uk-sands.org)

**Sands Why 17? campaign:**

Sands Why17? campaign asks a simple question. Why in spite of medical advances, do 17 babies die every day in the UK? For some of these deaths we simply do not yet know enough to be able to say why. Further research is needed.

The Facts today:

- 17 babies die every day in the UK (11 are stillbirths, 6 are neonatal deaths) totalling almost 6,500 baby deaths a year - the equivalent of 16 jumbo jets crashing every year with no survivors.
- This is four times the number of people who die every year of MRSA (1,593 MRSA deaths in 2007, UK Statistics Authority).
- This is double the number of adults who lose their lives on Britain's roads every year (2007 – 2,940 people were killed on the roads, Department of Transport).
- Ten times more babies are stillborn than die of cot death every year in the UK.
- The stillbirth rate has remained almost unchanged in the UK for the past 10 years. (CEMACH)
- Stillbirth is when a baby is born dead after 24 completed weeks of a pregnancy
- Neonatal death is when a baby is born alive but dies within the first 28 days of life

But increasingly, Sands believes that many of these deaths are potentially avoidable. The devastating impact of the death of a baby on the parents and their families and friends could be prevented.

What is needed is better antenatal care, increased funding for maternity services, more midwives and increased funding for research.

Sands Why17? campaign is seeking to raise £3million over the next 5 years to;

1. Focus public awareness on why, tragically, 17 babies a day in the UK are stillborn or die within the first twenty eight days of life;
2. Promote changes in antenatal practice that could prevent babies from dying;
3. Identify and support key research which could provide further information on why so many babies are dying