

# Grateful parents raise cash for North heart unit

... and they've roped in a TV celebrity to help

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**T**ODAY little Sebastian Hollingsworth looks a picture of health.

But the adorable 16-month-old boy was born with three heart defects which left untreated would have meant certain death had it not been for the medical expertise at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital.

By way of thanks for the lifesaving operation the toddler's parents Ivan and Nadine are now aiming to raise £100,000 for the Freeman's Children's Heart Unit.

And they have roped in some celebrity help from family friend and GMTV

**“We want to be able to raise enough money to buy a major piece of equipment for the unit**



**PICTURE OF HEALTH** Sebastian Hollingsworth with his mum Nadine and dad Ivan. Below, Sebastian at the Children's Heart Unit at Freeman Hospital

presenter Ben Shephard, who has agreed to take part in a charity trek. Sebastian's parents had elation turn to despair when they were told their son was suffering from congenital heart defect Tetralogy of Fallot when he was just 15 hours old.

As soon as the child was delivered at North Tyneside General Hospital midwives and nursing staff realised there was something wrong with Sebastian.

He was whisked in an incubator to Newcastle's Freeman Hospital by am-

balance with Ivan and Nadine following behind.

Soon a team of experts explained to them that Ivan would need to undergo open heart surgery if he wanted to see his second birthday.

Nadine said: "It seemed like an eternity when we were sat in the waiting room while tests were carried out on Sebastian.

"It's hard to describe the shock you feel when a consultant comes into the room

and tells you that your baby has a life-threatening condition."

Medics initially thought that Sebastian would have to undergo his surgery somewhere between nine to 12 months when he had developed enough to cope with the rigours of the invasive operation.

However, at only 16-weeks-old the baby took a turn for the worse and had to have emergency surgery to correct his defects.

He spent the next three weeks in the Freeman's paediatric intensive care unit recovering before being allowed to return to his home in Whitley Bay, North Tyneside.

Sebastian had a hole between two chambers in his heart patched up and a valve which was too narrow was slightly widened. An extra bundle of muscle on his heart wall will need to be trimmed down when he is older.

Nadine, 33, a business consultant and Ivan, a 35-year-old pharmaceutical rep, were both so impressed with the quality of care and compassion from hospital staff that they have now set themselves an ambitious target of raising £100,000 to buy vital equipment for the Freeman's Children's Heart Unit.

Nadine said: "Everyone always talks about how skilled the consultants and doctors are and that is true. But everyone who works on that ward is marvellous.

When we were in there a baby who had the same condition as Sebastian died. I was beside myself and distraught but the nurses explained the differences between the two cases.

"Even the cleaners who came in each morning knew just how to gauge our mood and keep our spirits up. We want to be able to raise enough money to buy a major piece of equipment for the unit."

The first major fundraising event towards the £100,000 target will involve Ivan completing the coast to coast cycle route. But instead of completing the 145-mile trip from Whitehaven to Tynemouth on two wheels Ivan will be running between the Irish and North seas.

And accompanying him on his epic trek will be family friend and GMTV presenter Ben Shephard. Ivan said: "Ben is someone I have known for years as our mothers went to college together. I decided to do the run and called him up and asked if he wanted to join in. He jumped at the chance."

Ivan and Ben will be running from July 31 with friend Andrew Roberts, whose son has cystic fibrosis. All money raised on the run will be split between the Children's Heart Unit and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

Anyone wanting to sponsor the three men or join them on a section of the run should visit: [www.seb4chuf.org.uk](http://www.seb4chuf.org.uk)

