

Running for a Humidicrib ...

In Memory of Henry, Jasper & Evan



The idea for a 'humidicrib' half marathon team in memory of my precious sons, Henry, Jasper and Evan came not long after Jasper's funeral. When contemplating the terrible empty months ahead, a friend suggested getting fit. That day a seed was planted, which resulted in a team of 98 people running the Sydney Morning Herald Half Marathon for the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Hospital for Women.

I was overwhelmed by the many lovely emails and phone calls that I received from both friends and strangers wanting to join me in running for a humidicrib in memory of my sons. Everybody had a story and a personal reason for running. Hayley told me about her beautiful identical twin daughters, Olivia and Maisie, who had died shortly after their birth. Hayley told me she wanted to run with me and help raise money so that we may save others from sharing our pain. Many told me that my baby boys and their struggle to live had inspired them to train and run the half marathon with me.

As race day morning dawned butterflies set in as we made our way to the starting line in The Rocks. Here we met up with the other members of the team, and we took our place with the other 4,900 entrants.

As we set off over the start line and ran under the bridge, with the Opera House in view on sunny Sydney morning I thought of my Henry, Jasper and Evan and how wonderful a gift their short lives were. Seeing so many bright blue shirts bearing Henry, Jasper and Evan's names along with their beautiful life-sized handprints, was all the inspiration I needed to run the 21.1km ahead of me.

I am glad to say that I managed to narrowly avoid being lapped by the winner. Just as I was nearing the halfway point (which is also the finish line) at 55 minutes, I felt excitement mounting and heard anticipated cheers for the winner approaching the finish line.



Sophie reaches the finish line

By the time I reached the 17km mark, my legs were exhausted and my head began to pound. I was still running, but I felt like I wasn't actually moving - rather like running in a dream. At 18km, however, I gathered speed as I felt the three tiny pairs of hands on my back push me up the final hill, and it was certainly Henry, Jasper and Evan who got me over the finish line in a respectable time of 113 minutes! The atmosphere there was really amazing, with Ash and a whole group of friends among the crowds cheering us to the finish.

That afternoon we had a party for the team at the Beach Palace Hotel in Coogee, who were the generous sponsors of our shirts. Penelope Hess, CEO of the RHW Foundation was there to announce that the pre-race donations were already up to \$35,000! Just four days later the amount raised rose to \$46,000.

Thank you to all the generous sponsors of our 'humidicrib team' who have made this fundraising event such an enormous success. I am overjoyed at the support people have shown in tribute to my 3 boys and the fundraising effort.

Sophie Smith

* The total amount raised through sponsorship of the 98 participants has now reached an amazing \$71,000!