

Bears of Sheffield and Twinkl set to help Rory find his roar!



The Bears of Sheffield are coming this summer, featuring different designs, unique names and colourful patterns. One bear who has an extra special name is the Bear sponsored by Twinkl, named after a patient Rory, who regularly visits Sheffield Children's.

Rory and his twin brother Austin were born prematurely 14 weeks early in 2016 at just 26 weeks gestation. The brothers weighed just 2lb and after being ventilated and receiving

varying amounts of oxygen therapy for almost 3 months, they took their first breaths without aid at 92 days old. At 99 days old they were able to go home.

Three weeks after they had settled in at home, Mum Kelly and Dad Ashley noticed that Rory's breathing had changed. The family were rushed by ambulance to Sheffield Children's where it was discovered Rory's airway had collapsed.

Rory spent several weeks in Sheffield Children's undergoing tests and procedures to help manage his airway and make it safe for the family to return home. It was decided that the best solution would be for Rory to have surgery to fit a tracheostomy. A tracheostomy is when a tube is inserted into the airway to allow oxygen to pass through and ensure safe breathing.

Kelly and Ashley stayed on the Intensive Care Unit at Sheffield Children's with Rory and were trained for many weeks on how to manage the tracheostomy, starting with short trips to Weston Park opposite the hospital and building up to going home for short periods at a time.

Mum Kelly said, "Rory getting his tracheostomy was a very difficult time but equally we had spent so long in hospital and so much time apart whilst trying to juggle one twin at home and one in hospital, we were just eager to do whatever was needed to keep Rory safe and be able to live life again."

Rory lived with his tracheostomy for almost four years, having regular visits to Sheffield Children's for check-ups. That is until last year in August when he managed to breathe and maintain his oxygen levels safely without it for the first time.

Kelly added: "Nurses, play specialists and doctors from across the hospital who had met Rory along the way came to wish us well and mark the occasion. It was so special; the staff are like family to us, and we will never forget the care they gave to us."

"Austin and Rory are now five-years-old, Rory will still be monitored to check that his airway is continuing to grow and strengthen and that he is still safely maintaining good respiratory health without the tracheostomy but so far everyone is really happy with him. The biggest challenge now for Rory is to find his voice, having the tracheostomy meant that very little air passed through his vocal cords."

Finding Rory's voice has been the inspiration for naming the Bear sponsored by Twinkl Educational Resources in the Bears of Sheffield sculpture trail.

Kelly, who works for Twinkl as Teacher Video Content Creator, put forward the name Rory as part of an employee competition to name their Bear.

"It is such a great tribute for Rory to have the Bear named after him. Hopefully this will be the year that Rory finds his roar!"

Kelly continues: "Austin and Rory were our final frozen embryo, our lucky last. We underwent IVF treatment and when I fell pregnant and with twins, we couldn't believe our luck. At the time I was teaching full time, but due to the intensity of care that Rory needed 24/7 I chose to stay home and support Austin and Rory as much as I could until I could return to work.

"I never envisaged this would be four years later when they started school but my role of Teacher Video Content Creator at Twinkl is perfect. I have been here for about six months now and I love it. Our team of experienced teachers have created a wealth of video lessons at a time when the world needed it and to be a part of that was something special.

"We have also recently begun sharing our video lessons with hospitals and the play team at Sheffield Children's are using our content now which is such a great feeling. To know that what we do is being used to support children like Austin and Rory but also the staff, means so much to us as a family."

Twinkl is the Education Partner for the Bears of Sheffield and has provided a range of free resources to support the schools taking part in the trail. Illustrators and Graphic Designers from the team have also held virtual sessions to help schools design and decorate their bears.

Jonathan Seaton, Co-founder and CEO of Twinkl, said: "We are so proud to name our bear Rory and we are sure everyone will be inspired by the story and courage of Rory, Austin, Kelly and their family and the support they received from Sheffield Children's Hospital. We are absolutely delighted to be part of the Bears of Sheffield campaign. The sculpture trail will bring joy across the city and the money raised will help make a vital difference to children here and across the UK."

To find out more about the Bears of Sheffield and how the trail will support Sheffield Children's to help more families like Rory's, please visit www.bearsofsheffield.com

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