

**HEALTHY
MOMS.
STRONG
BABIES.**



Dear Friends,

Brian, Cameron, Dylan and myself are honored to have been selected to serve as the Ambassador Family for the March of Dimes Born to Shine Gala. As most of you know, our boys' preterm journey was unexpected and difficult. Seeing how much they've overcome and how incredible they are today gives us the motivation to make sure all families get the best possible start.

Our pregnancy had a few bumps in the road. When I was 15 weeks pregnant, Brian and I learned that we were both carriers for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), which gave the twins a 1 in 4 chance of inheriting the disorder. After speaking with a genetic counselor and considering the severity of the disorder, we opted to have an amniocentesis done. A couple of hours after the procedure, Dylan's amniotic sac had a rupture and we were told there was a chance of losing him and potentially even his brother. After a week of bedrest his fluids were increasing, and after two weeks they were back to a normal amount. Three weeks later we got the amnio results and thankfully learned that both boys were unaffected by SMA. The rest of my pregnancy was smooth sailing until I started to feel like something was wrong at 27 weeks and 5 days. Brian and I went to the hospital and our worst nightmare started to unfold when we were told I was in early labor. Three days later, on December 31, 2020, Cameron and Dylan were born 12 weeks early at just 2 pounds, 12 ounces and 2 pounds, 8 ounces. It was never determined what caused my preterm labor.

Our incredible neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) staff told us what a rollercoaster the NICU would be but I completely underestimated that statement. I felt as though we were constantly taking two steps forward and one step back. The first two weeks were the hardest weeks of my life. Cameron had a staph infection which led to sepsis and him needing to be intubated, and Dylan had a grade 3 brain bleed scare. Luckily, they overcame those two setbacks as well as numerous other ones along the way. Slowly but surely, with the constant nurturing and expertise from our NICU nurses and neonatologists, the boys grew stronger and we celebrated every milestone. From ventilators, to CPAP, to high flow nasal cannulas and finally to room air. From orogastric feeding tubes, to nasogastric feeding tubes and finally bottles and breastfeeding. From incubators to open cribs. Cameron and Dylan fought fiercely to be here and we're so proud to call them our sons. We never imagined this would be our story, but looking at our two healthy boys who are thriving today makes us not want to change a thing.

We never take one day with our boys for granted, as we know that not every parent of preterm babies gets to leave the NICU doors with their child. There are not enough thanks we can give the entire NICU staff at AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center. They quickly became our family and were the support system we so desperately needed. We're also grateful for the extraordinary research, education and resources provided by March of Dimes. For over 80 years, they have helped millions of babies survive and thrive. Our family is hoping you'll join us in supporting their mission to fight for the health of all moms and babies. Please click [HERE](#) to donate on our behalf. Your 100 percent tax-deductible contribution will make a world of difference to other families like ours.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts,
Brian, Kelly, Cameron and Dylan