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Herald &amp; News

# Academy is a step closer

**New Haw:** Mum now has enough money to register charity that will help others who may suffer a stillbirth

by **David Stubbings**

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THE founder of an organisation that aims to reduce the number of stillbirths in the UK says she is amazed after raising enough money to become a registered charity.

Last month, Heidi Eldridge, 32, of Hartland Close, New Haw, still had to raise £1,000 before the end of the financial year to register the Mums And Midwives Awareness (MAMA) Academy with the Charities Commission and Companies House.

But after a group of runners told her it would not be able to get the sponsorship money to her in time, Heidi found herself needing £2,000 to ensure she

had the necessary funds.

Undeterred, through a series of cake sales, a fashion show, an egg hunt and other events, Heidi and other volunteers managed to collect more than £4,000, which she said was astonishing.

"I think I need a miracle, an absolute miracle," she said, on learning she needed to gather £2,000. "I went to church and prayed and said 'if it needs to happen to become registered this year, we need to get money in'.

"Then it all happened and we raised pretty much double."

In addition, Advanced Resource Managers, of Havant in Hampshire, also raised money for the academy by making it the company's charity of the year.

Heidi created the group after her first son, Aidan, was stillborn in 2009. After finding out that she had not received the latest information on how to look after the unborn baby during her pregnancy, she then met other mothers who had similar experiences.

She has since given birth to a second son, Tobiah, who is now aged two-and-a-half, and is expecting another child later this year.

Becoming an officially registered charity will make the MAMA Academy eligible for additional funding and grants.

"Everyone is just amazed, absolutely amazed," Heidi said. "It shows what you can achieve if you all work together."

"Everyone doing their bit can make a huge difference.

We never thought we would get £4,000."

In the meantime, though, the extra cash means that leaflets can now be printed for hospitals and mums-to-be, which Heidi hopes will be ready within the next six weeks and distributed to hospitals across Surrey.

Heidi and her academy hopes this information will

help to bring down the rate of stillbirths in the UK.

Its aim is to give unborn babies the best chance of a safe arrival in the world by providing the latest guidelines and research for midwives and educating women about how they can reduce the risks in pregnancy.

Heidi added: "Seventeen

babies die every day. The *Lancet* report came out in 2011 and said more than 70% of deaths are preventable because they happen to close to term."

Heidi gives talks to midwives in hospitals including St Peter's in Chertsey and St George's in Tooting and she hopes to start producing training videos in the future.

