

FEATURE

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Herald&amp;News

# MAMA is the word for Heidi

Driven by her own experience after her first son was stillborn, Heidi Eldridge is now dedicated to making sure mothers and midwives get the information they need. She tells *David Stubbings* it's time for MAMA – Mums and Midwives Awareness Academy – to make the next move

A CHARITY for mums and midwives is calling out for donations to help it become an officially registered charity.

Mums And Midwives Awareness Academy was set up by Heidi Eldridge, 32, from Hartland Close, New Haw, to help expectant mothers to look after their unborn babies and for midwives to ensure they pass on as much important information to those carrying children and to keep up-to-date with the latest pregnancy information.

Mrs Eldridge decided to create the organisation after her first son, Aidan, was stillborn in 2009. I felt I was not given the right information I should have been told about," she said.

"Subsequent to that, I met loads of other mums who felt the same way. I started giving presentations with information and risks mums need to know about and built up relationships with midwives, who are under a lot of pressure themselves and need something with the latest information."

The academy has hundreds of people signed up to its newsletter while Heidi herself regularly visits hospitals to talk to midwives.

Sarah Legg, a midwife at Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals said: "We really appreciate the work and support given by Heidi from the MAMA Academy; her talks are always really helpful and interesting."

Since then she has gone on to set up the academy which is now trying to raise the last £1,000 of the £5,000 needed to become a registered charity by April 1.

Despite being requested to do talks in hospitals such as St Peter's in Chertsey, St Thomas's in London and even a request to go to Scotland, Heidi said getting registered charity status would make a big difference.

"To become a registered charity means full recognition in hospitals and can gain access to many more hospitals," she explained.

"If we don't get it means we've got to raise another £5,000.

"It is going to be a hard slog to get into the hospitals and raising money.

"If we get it, we can get access to certain grants and companies help you out more."

Heidi has since had a second son, Tobiah, with her husband, Steve, is now expecting another child later this year, and is looking for volunteers as well as money to help out with the charity.

A number of events have also been organised to help raise money.

These include a fashion show at Niomes Boutique in Old Woking Road, West Byfleet, starting at 7pm on Thursday March 28 with tickets available for £4 on the door.

Other events include collecting money at Mothercare in Brooklands on March 23 and cake sales in King George's Drive, New Haw on Tuesday March 19 from 2.30pm-4.30pm



Heidi Eldridge, right, with her husband, Steve, and second son, Tobiah.

and an Easter egg hunt at Bourne Valley Garden Centre, Woodham Park Road, Woodham on Good Friday, March 29.

Anybody wanting to get involved or find out more can contact Heidi at [contact@mamaacademy.com](mailto:contact@mamaacademy.com) or visit [www.mamaacademy.com](http://www.mamaacademy.com).