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NEWS theifp.ca

Local boy needs community s help for life-changing surgery

By Kathryn Boyle kboyle@theifp.ca

A local family has asked the community for support in funding a life-changing surgery for their four-year-old son, Dylan.

Four years ago, first-time mother Tara Tutolo was working a regular day at work. Not expecting her bundle of joy for another five weeks, she was surprised to be having what seemed like contractions. She drove home, called her husband, Mike, and they went to the hospital, where her water broke. Six hours later, Dylan was born at just 34 weeks.

He seemed healthy, but because he was premature, the nurses put him into neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and hooked him up to a breathing mask to assist with his breathing.

It was from there, I noticed something was wrong, Tara said. I noticed he would always hold his leg up straight in the air, but we didn t know for sure what it was. It was just mother s intuition then.

When Dylan was three months old, Tara and Dylan's father, Mike, noticed his eyes were crossing in. He would be diagnosed with bilateral strabismus, where the eyes don't align with each other, and would have corrective surgery at a year old and again at three.

Tests were done on Tara's placenta, and they found something wrong.

They said I had placenta insufficiency, and that Dylan wasn t getting enough oxygen and nutrients, Tara said.

By this time, Tara and Mike suspected Dylan might have cerebral palsy (CP), so through a geneticist and a neurologist, Dylan was scheduled an MRI on his spine as well as his brain.

His spine came back normal, but his brain showed damage in the areas that affect muscle tone, and impairs muscle coordination in both of his legs, more so his left leg.

With this information, Dylan was officially diagnosed with Spastic Diplegia Cerebral Palsy, due to the lack of oxygen and nutrients provided by the placenta.

To relax the muscles, Dylan has undergone three rounds of Botox injections in his legs. It worked great the first time, but between four and five months, it wears off.

It's a temporary Band-Aid, Mike said. It's not a permanent solution.

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