

Tot's happy birthday after life-saving op

A BRAVE little girl from Cheshunt will celebrate her first birthday today (Thursday, 19 April) surrounded by her family just weeks after she underwent life-saving heart surgery.

Nicole Dunne, of Richardson Crescent, was born with a serious and complex heart defect called Tetralogy of Fallot, which required open heart surgery to correct, and now her thankful family are trying to raise £2,000 for the hospital which cared for her.

Sales director Paul, 40, and his wife Tracy, 39, were told that their third daughter had the condition



BIRTHDAY JOY: Little Nicole Dunne celebrates her first birthday with parents Paul and Tracey and 7-year-old twin sisters Rebecca, left, and Laura

before she was even born.

"Obviously the diagnosis was devastating," said Paul.

"We were told by the staff at Chase Farm Hospital that Nicole might be born blue and that she would have to have this operation early in her life. It was very traumatic for both of us.

"In March we were called in to the Evelina Children's Hospital in London for the operation. Putting your daughter's life into others' hands is terrifying, but all of the staff took great care of her and us, and we want to say thank you."

The couple, who have been married for 19 years and also have twin girls Rebecca and Laura, 7, are keen to raise as much money as possible for the Evelina, which is part of Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital.

Paul explained: "Helping the hospital seems to be the best way to say thank you. Nurses and doctors are so often criticised, but they were brilliant and we'd like to give something back. We will be hosting a special charity evening for friends and family this weekend with an auction and a raffle, including a prize of a £100 voucher from Gentry hair salon in Goffs Oak."

Following the four-hour by-pass operation, Nicole is making a good recovery.

"She will need to have another operation and will have to have check-ups throughout her life," said Paul.

"She's also having a little trouble feeding at the moment, but we are working through that.

"We're just thankful to have her home with us."

To make a donation to Nicole's appeal log on to www.justgiving.com/nicoledunne .

