10,000ft Tandem Freefall Parachute Jump, by Tony Vogel

On 17th June 2011 I will be completing a 10,000ft tandem freefall parachute jump in aid of CLAPA-Cambridge (Cleft Lip & Palate Association) and the Sick Childrens Trust. Imagine standing at the edge of an open doorway in an aircraft flying at 10,000 feet - the noise of the engines and the wind ringing in your ears with only the outline of distant fields below. Now imagine leaning forward out of that doorway and letting go - falling forward into the clouds, diving down through the air and freefalling at over 120mph!!
That will be me, 17th June 2011.

My son Ben was born in September 2009 with a cleft palate and Pierre Robin syndrome, meaning breathing and feeding problems were likely. We had no idea that he would be born with this. Ben struggled to feed and after 5 days had lost 17% of his initial baby weight. My wife and Ben were readmitted to hospital where they spent a week struggling to get Ben's weight a bit more stable. This involved my wife spending hours expressing breastmilk and feeding it to Ben via a tube down his nose. Throughout this period we were supported by brilliant Clinical nurse specialists, equipment to help feed Ben and invaluable support and encouragement.

Ben was taken in for his cleft palate repair at 7 months old to Addenbrookes Hospital. The operation went well but Ben faced breathing problems in recovery and after a very scary 24 hours was put on a ventilator and stayed in intensive care for 4 nights. While Ben was in hospital my wife and I stayed at Acorn House, run by the Sick Childrens Trust. This is run purely on donations and is a fantastic charity which allows families to stay near their seriously ill children whilst in hospital.

Since Ben's operation he has recovered well and is now a lively happy little one-year old.

Please help me raise money for these two fantastic charities, which have made a very difficult year for my family much more bearable.

From Tony Vogel. **http://www.mycharitypage.com/tonyvog/**