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Back in 2002, Wheelers Hill mum Sally-Anne thought she had a regular pregnancy, but as soon as she saw her newborn son Adam, now 20, she knew something wasn’t right.

‘When they held Adam up I noticed his right arm flopped down. He couldn’t hold it up. I remember word-for-word saying to everyone in the room he reminds me of someone who has had a stroke,’ Sally-Anne said.

After several reassurances Adam ‘was fine and to just give him time’ Sally-Anne and husband Darren left hospital for home.

‘The following 2 weeks I noticed Adam’s facial awareness was vague,’ Sally-Anne said.

‘His head was always turned to the left, looking over his shoulder. He wasn’t looking around. He didn’t seem to be looking at things properly. It was like nothing was there.’

At Adam’s 6-week check-up a health nurse thought the newborn’s symptoms were unusual too.

Sally-Anne’s brother, a doctor, thought the same. He urged the couple to get a referral to have some neurological scans done.

At 5 months old, scans confirmed Adam did have a stroke in Sally-Anne’s womb.

According to the Stroke Foundation up to 600 Aussie kids experience stroke each year.

‘Stroke can happen at any age. In Adam’s case 2 weeks before his birth and it affected the right side of his body,’ Darren said.

‘Somehow he got his hand caught behind his head in the womb. It stopped his arm and fingers from forming. It left him with limited use in that arm. He also walks with a slight limp,’ he said.

The stroke also caused Adam to develop epilepsy and learning difficulties.

‘Adam’s stroke affected his frontal lobe – his cognitive understanding, reasoning, it just isn’t there,’ Sally-Anne said.

Raising 4 children, Adam number 3, Sally-Anne and Darren said life was pretty tough for their family prior to the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

‘Back then there was no NDIS. Nothing like it. I tried to get support, but with Adam’s epilepsy no one would care for him without me being there,’ Sally-Anne said.

Now an NDIS participant, not only is Adam thriving, Sally-Anne and Darren are too.

Sally-Anne said Adam is now out 5 days a week learning important life-skills. He's also enjoying greater social and community inclusion and proud learning to be independent.

'Darren's able to run his engineering business from home and I've returned to work. I'm a teacher's aide. I'm giving back supporting other kids with special needs,' Sally-Anne said.

'The NDIS has been so good for us. Adam goes to WATCH Disability Services 5 days a week. He gets picked up and dropped off. He does lots of fun activities – Tenpin bowling, swimming, art, and craft. He just loves it.

'Adam's also part of another group called Inspire. He's learnt to use public transport, to shop, to cook. He also does a handyman session, learning to fix things around the centre.

'On Tuesday nights after WATCH he goes to Breathing Space with Sue. He learns life skills there too.

'They might play soccer or cricket for an hour. Then Sue takes him to the supermarket to choose what he wants for dinner. They buy all the food, then cook a meal together.'

'I help Sue cook dinner. I really like pasta and I love to help,' Adam said.

Sally Anne said Adam stays overnight at Sue's. 'He really enjoys it. It also gives Darren and I some time together. We might go out for dinner then go see a movie.

'Being back at work has been good for me too. I've got my own identity. I'm out there doing something. It's not just for me. I'm helping to support other kids with special needs too.

'I'm really happy to be back contributing to society. We've got the NDIS to help our son, so it means we can give back as well. That's how we look at it,' she said.

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