Amazing Auntie Steps Up for Charity in London Marathon

Thursday 18 February, 2016

An amazing Auntie is taking on her first marathon to say thank you to the charity which supported her sister-in-law when her baby was seriously ill.

Amanda Carter, 35 from Essex, will be running the Virgin Money London Marathon later this year in a bid to raise £1,000 for The Sick Children's Trust. The charity, which provides 'Home from Home' accommodation for families with sick children, supported her sister-in-law, Hannah, and her partner Dan when their baby, Scarlett, was born prematurely at 31 weeks weighing just over 2lbs.

Baby Scarlett, now one-year-old, underwent specialist treatment at The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, due to breathing complications. During this time, The Sick Children's Trust gave her family free 'Home from Home' accommodation in its Chestnut House, located just below the Intensive Care Unit, so that they could be together. Chestnut House also supported Scarlett's sister, Trinity, as she was able stay with her Mum and Dad. **Amanda, who will also compete in the Colchester Half Marathon a month before the main event, says:**

“The Sick Children's Trust helped my family so much that I wanted to give something back. When Scarlett was born she was tiny like a doll, but she was perfect. After she was taken to intensive care, Hannah was discharged from the hospital and was in a complete state of shock and distress. This is when Chestnut House came in and played a huge part.

“Being an hour and a half away from home, I don't know how Hannah would have been able to care for Scarlett and be so close to her without a place to stay. Hannah needed to continue to express milk and bond with her baby and Chestnut House made that possible. The accommodation also meant Hannah's eldest could come over with Dan and they could all spend time together as a family and be stable for Trinity, as at times she was missing her Mummy so much.

“I was amazed by what a great facility The Sick Children's Trust's Chestnut House was and still am. Hannah and Dan could do normal things at such a stressful time – they could cook, relax and talk to the other parents who were going through a similar situation in a safe, warm and friendly environment while being close to Scarlett."

Amanda is grateful for the help and support The Sick Children's Trust gave Hannah and Dan during Scarlett's first stage of recovery. Although Scarlett is now back home, she has had regular admissions to Colchester Hospital and has complex problems which will require specialist treatment. **Amanda, who also has two children of her own and fits training around family life, continues:**

“At the moment I am very nervous about the marathon but I keep telling myself it's just because I'm not ready for it yet - but by the time it comes round I will be! I am hoping to raise at least £1,000 and will be doing lots of fundraising leading up to the marathon to make sure I hit this target."

It costs The Sick Children's Trust £28 per night to provide a family with a room in one of its ten 'Homes from Home' around the country. Alongside a private bedroom, the 'Homes from Home' include access to communal living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, playrooms and laundry facilities. **Chestnut House Manager, Abigail Abdel-aal, says:**

“We're delighted that Amanda has decided to take on this challenge to raise money for us. What's so moving about her fundraising is that she is doing it on behalf of her family as a thank you. The family are so close and they all used to come up to the house to support Hannah, Dan and Trinity. It's lovely to see their dedication and support for one another and Amanda's determination by taking on the Colchester Half Marathon just a month before the London Marathon! We wish her all the best and look forward to cheering her on the day."

Amanda is one of eight runners raising money for The Sick Children's Trust through the Virgin Money London Marathon, if you think you could support our runners by cheering them on, please contact Diane@sickchildrenstrust.org.

To read Amanda's full story and support her fundraising, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/Amanda-Carter1980/

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