Big Chocolate Tea is raising some dough in Cambridge for The Sick Children's Trust

Monday 14 May, 2018

The Sick Children's Trust's biggest annual fundraising campaign, Big Chocolate Tea, has got off to a choc-tastic start after families, friends, supporters and staff came together for a fun-filled day.

The charity hosted its very own party to celebrate the return of Big Chocolate Tea, which raises money to support families with seriously ill children in hospital with free 'Home from Home' accommodation.

The event took place at Acorn House, one of two 'Homes from Home' in Cambridge, supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. With a selection of tasty treats and delicious cupcakes to enjoy, the day was jam-packed with lots of chocola-tea fun. Among the guests was Mum Emily with Jude, her lively one year old toddler. Jude was born with sepsis in serious respiratory distress and required lifesaving treatment on the neonatal intensive care unit at The Rose Hospital in Cambridge. During this time his parents, Emily and Craig, were supported at The Sick Children's Trust's second Cambridge 'Home from Home' Chestnut House, minutes from their son's hospital bedside. **Emily says**:

"Retuning to Cambridge has been a surreal experience for me but I really wanted to come along and support the amazing charity that kept our family together when Jude was in hospital. Big Chocolate Tea is a great way to raise awareness and money for The Sick Children's Trust so that it can support more families who find themselves in similar situations to my own. And the fact that you can do it whilst being surrounded by chocolate and cake is a bonus!"

Every year The Sick Children's Trust provides much-needed emotional and practical support to around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital. Although the accommodation is free of charge to families, the charity relies entirely on voluntary donations to run its houses and is calling for the nation to join in with Big Chocolate Tea so it can continue to help thousands of families stay together with their sick child when it matters most.

Also spreading the chocolate cheer at Acorn House was Mum Kerry with her one year old son, Ned, who was born prematurely at 28 weeks, weighing just 1.2 kilos. While Ned received lifesaving treatment at The Rosie Hospital, Kerry was able to stay just moments away from him at Chestnut House. **Kerry says:**

"I wanted to come along to show my support for the charity that gave me so much when Ned was ill. I really don't know what I would've done without The Sick Children's Trust and I will always be grateful. It was lovely returning to a 'Home from Home' and seeing the familiar faces of the house staff. And Ned couldn't get enough of being fussed over by everyone at the party!"

While Big Chocolate Tea runs during the month of May, supporters can choose to take part in at any point during the year and will receive a pack full of goodies to help host their event. By raising at least £30 during Big Chocolate Tea, participants will be able to support a family with 'Home from Home' accommodation for one night. **Abi Abdel-aal, Acorn and Chestnut House Manager, says:**

"We want to thank all the families for coming along to Acorn House. Big Chocolate Tea is our biggest and most exciting fundraising campaign of the year so it was lovely to see everyone getting together to show their support!

"Big Chocolate Tea is something that everyone can get involved in and it's so easy to organise thanks to the free starter pack which is full of delicious recipes and fundraising ideas.

"Why not join in with Big Chocolate Tea and help support families with seriously ill children in hospital? By raising £30, you'll help ease some of the stresses and worries that come with having a seriously ill child in hospital by giving them a 'Home from Home' just a few minutes' walk from their loved one's bedside."

To find out how you can get involved with Big Chocolate Tea, please email bigchoctea@sickchildrenstrust.org or visit www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea/

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