Charity kicks off choc-tastic campaign in style!

Wednesday 18 April, 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 afternoon.

The charity hosted its very own tea 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 Stevenson House - one of the charity's ten 'Homes from Home'- located at The Royal London Children's Hospital in Whitechapel, London. With a selection of tasty treats to bake and delicious cupcakes to decorate, the afternoon was jam packed with lots of chocola-tea fun. Among the guests was 17 year old Chloe, who required lifesaving treatment at the specialist hospital in 2015 during which time her Mum, Emma, was supported at Stevenson House. **Emma, who joined Chloe at the party along with Stepdad Trevor and brother Ryan, says:**

"Chloe and Ryan had such a ball, popping on chef hats, decorating cakes and just generally getting stuck in with the chocolate fun! I knew that retuning to Stevenson House would bring back lots of emotions for Trevor and me, but I really wanted to come along and support the amazing charity that kept our family together when Chloe was in hospital. It was a lovely afternoon and I can't wait to hold my own Big Chocolate Tea event later this month!"

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 rolling up their sleeves and spreading the chocolate cheer at Stevenson House were parents Harriet Banham and Nick Smith, and their three children – twins Rafferty and Aubrey, and younger brother Jospah. Following serious complications with the twins during pregnancy, Rafferty and Aubrey had to be delivered by emergency caesarean. Rafferty became seriously ill and required lifesaving treatment, but his parents were able to stay just moments away from him at Stevenson House. **Harriet says:**

"It was so lovely returning to Stevenson House with Nick and our three boys. The Sick Children's Trust supported us with free 'Home from Home' accommodation when the twins were born so we were delighted to be invited back and show our support. The kids loved being able to get stuck decorating their own cupcakes with all sorts of sweet treats. Although I'm pretty sure their favourite part was eating all their creations at the end!"

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, they will be able to support a family with 'Home from Home' accommodation for one night. **Deborah Leonard, Stevenson House Manager, says:**

"We want to thank all the families for coming along to Stevenson 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 us in May 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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