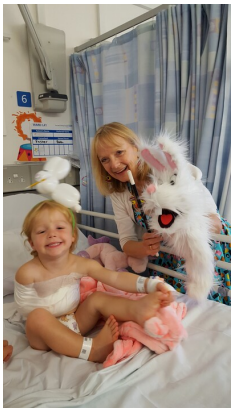
Chesterfield family thank charity for ‘Home from Home’ in time of need

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Media:









A Chesterfield family are thanking The Sick Children’s Trust for supporting them with free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation when their daughter required surgery at a hospital far away from home.

Zoe and Dale Jackson, both 37 from Newbold, were supported at The Sick Children’s Trust’s Eckersley House when their daughter, Imogen, required major surgery on the right-hand side of her body. In 2014, Imogen was born with a rare condition known as Poland Syndrome which is characterised by the webbing of the fingers and underdevelopment of chest muscle. Imogen had to undergo surgery at Leeds Children’s Hospital – 90 minutes away from home. During her time in hospital, Imogen’s parents were never more than a few minutes from her side as they were given free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation at Eckersley House.

This year, Eckersley House is celebrating 25 years of supporting families with seriously ill children undergoing treatment at Leeds Children’s Hospitals. The Jackson family are one in over 11,000 families to have benefitted from the ‘Home from Home’ which runs entirely on voluntary donations. **Mum Zoe, a Sports Coach, says:**

“My family have been supported twice at Eckersley House and unless you’ve ever been in the situation when your child is seriously ill in hospital, you’ll never know the weight that is lifted by being given free accommodation.

“I remember our first night in Leeds having to say goodbye to my husband Dale as he left us at the hospital to go try and get some sleep in a hotel which was on the other side of town. Not only was I worried and anxious about my daughter undergoing surgery the following day, but I was worried about Dale as we were in a big city, far away from home and he was all alone.

“The following day, we kissed Imogen goodbye as she was taken to theatre and were told about Eckersley House. We called them, explained our situation and we were invited across. Eckersley House was just a stone’s throw away from the hospital. We went in and met Jane McHale, the House Manager. They were in the midst of a Pyjama Party fundraising for the house and Jane offered us a cuppa and a cake, but most importantly a room. I was so relieved, it was such a weight off our shoulders. I didn’t have to worry anymore.”

Eckersley House has 22 family bedrooms, eight bathrooms, three fully equipped kitchens and communal areas, three playrooms, three shared living rooms and laundry facilities. It also has a self-contained flat for when a child is recovering from a liver transplant and within all rooms there is a direct telephone line to the ward. **Zoe continues:**

“It’s very draining when you have a poorly child in hospital, but having a place like Eckersley House makes it so much easier. You don’t realise what it’s like to have a child in hospital, and all the difficulties that come with it until it happens. You don’t realise the strain and stresses it puts on you. If it wasn’t for Eckersley House, we would’ve had to spend at least £500 on hotels, and we wouldn’t have been able to bring our son, Jacob, over to Leeds at all.

“Imogen is doing really well now and just started school this year. She has even done a little talk to all the other children about how everyone is different and how she’s a big brave girl having had two operations. She’s amazing.”

The Sick Children’s Trust runs ten ‘Homes from Home’ across the country, three of which are based in Yorkshire. Alongside Eckersley House, the charity has two ‘Homes from Home’ supporting families at Sheffield Children’s Hospital – Treetop and Magnolia Houses. **Jane McHale, Eckersley House Manager, says:**

“We’re so pleased to hear that Imogen is doing well and enjoying school! We would also like to thank Zoe, Dale, Jacob and Imogen for sharing their story to help raise awareness of The Sick Children’s Trust. As a charity we rely entirely on voluntary donations to support families with seriously ill children in hospital, and really appreciate their helping is spreading the word about our work.”

For further information about The Sick Children’s Trust, please visit http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/



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