Chigwell Family Join Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea Campaign

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The family of a teenage girl who was hit by a car and spent five and a half weeks in The Royal London Hospital undergoing specialist treatment are calling on their local community to support The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea fundraiser.

Ruth, Martin and Jodie Kane, from Chigwell, were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation by The Sick Children's Trust so that they could be a few minutes' walk from 15-year-old Phoebe's hospital bedside when she was hit by a car.

For five and a half weeks, Phoebe underwent treatment at The Royal London for major injuries from she suffered in the accident. For nine days she was in a coma and her parents were told she may never wake up. But to everyone's amazement, she did and made a rapid recovery. During this time the family were supported at Stevenson House, located just minutes from Phoebe's ward. Mum Ruth says:

"We were terrified Phoebe wouldn't wake up from her coma. Her injury was a grade three trauma -something we knew nothing about. We knew that her skull was broken and her brain had become damaged, but we didn't understand all the jargon – we just knew it was serious. We were told she may never wake up and she may never recover…all we could do was wait and hope she wasn't in too much pain.

"We needed each other and we needed to be there for Phoebe which is why The Sick Children's Trust's Stevenson House was so vital during this turmoil. Having a 'Home from Home' was a huge thing for us for so many reasons. It meant that we could travel this path together and not leave anyone behind. It would have been a nightmare without Stevenson House, to think of all the travelling back and forth – what if something had happened while we were on our way to see Phoebe, or on our way back home? And we wouldn't have been able to afford any accommodation for the whole family for the best part of six weeks – it would have been impossible. To put it simply, Stevenson House was a lifeline.**"**

The Kane family are joining The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea fundraising event and are calling for their local community to get involved too. Big Chocolate Tea aims to raise thousands of pounds to help support more families across the UK with 'Home from Home' accommodation when their child is sick in hospital. It costs on average £30 per night to provide a family with a room in one of the charity's 'Homes from Home' which include access to communal kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms and dining rooms alongside a direct telephone line from each bedroom to the hospital ward. Stevenson House Manager Alan Booth says:

"When a Phoebe was taken to The Royal London to receive critical treatment, life for the whole family was thrown into turmoil. Stevenson House meant Phoebe's family could stay together in free 'Home from Home' accommodation, just minutes from Phoebe's bedside - easing some of the worries they had at an incredibly difficult time.

"Big Chocolate Tea is all about getting together with friends, family and colleagues over tea and chocolate. At the same time, it's a chance to make a difference to families with seriously ill children. By holding a Big Chocolate Tea event and raising £30, you could help support a family with 'Home from Home' accommodation and keep them together when it matters most."

If you'd like to find out more about how you can get involved, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea/

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