CHUF donates over £10,000 to The Sick Children's Trust to help keep families together

Monday 22 February, 2021

The Sick Children's Trust has received £10,740 from the Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF) to give families with a child on the cardiac unit at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital a place to stay just minutes from their bedside.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, The Sick Children's Trust has continued to support families with seriously ill children in hospital with a place to stay. Scott House, one of the charity's ten 'Homes from Home' which is located at Newcastle's Freeman's Hospital, supports families with children undergoing major heart surgery and those waiting for lifesaving heart transplants. However, the charity is forecasting a 25-30% loss of income and needs vital funds to continue its work to keep families together.

CHUF, which provides holistic care to children and their families, has been instrumental in supporting The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House from the very beginning. In 2014, CHUF worked in partnership with the charity by raising £1.65 million which went towards the building of Scott House.

Recognising the benefits of keeping a family together during a child's hospital treatment, and in continuation of their partnership, CHUF has given The Sick Children's Trust a grant of £10,740 which will fund two family bedrooms at Scott House for a year. Parents Emma and David Sidaway have been staying at Scott House for the last 11 weeks since their 12 year old son, Isaac, was suddenly diagnosed with a rare heart condition called dilated cardiomyopathy. During this time, Isaac has undergone major surgery to be fitted with an electric heart pump, known as ventricular assist device (VAD) to work with his heart to pump blood around his body effectively. **Emma, 44 from North Lincolnshire, said:**

"We have no family or friends in Newcastle, which is around three hours away from our home. Scott House is so convenient and is somewhere we feel at home. It is just a short walk from Isaac's side. When Isaac started to come around from his operation, David would wake up really early and go over at 4am to sit with him. When Isaac had an unsettled night, we could just walk out the door and be there so quickly. Scott House has given us the freedom to be there for Isaac whenever he needs us.

"Being here on site when Isaac needed us, together so we could support each other, is exactly what we needed and what Scott House gives us.

"Isaac is now one step closer to home and has moved into the self-contained flat at Scott House. We have been petrified about going home as there is a lot to learn about the VAD and what Isaac requires. Having Scott House has given David and I a chance to live with Isaac on our own, while doing the jobs of changing his dressings and giving him his medications. We have been able to absorb it all and take care of Isaac which has built our confidence up massively. The thought of leaving the ward and going straight home was frightening but seeing the hospital just across from Scott House is a huge comfort."

Scott House supports around 385 families a year and has 18 bedrooms, two kitchens, living rooms, playrooms, laundry facilities and a separate flat for transplant patients. **Jane Featherstone, Chief Executive at The Sick Children's Trust, said:**

"We are incredibly grateful to CHUF for this generous donation which will help us to keep more families together at a time when it is needed the most. The last year has been challenging for everyone, but even more so for families who have a seriously ill child in hospital. By giving them a place to stay, free of charge, it gives them one less thing to worry about."

Since being founded, CHUF, which raises vital funds for large and small pieces of equipment, facilities, aftercare, salaries and research, has donated over ten million pounds to the cardiac unit at Freeman Hospital to help families of children with heart problems. **Charlotte Campbell, Director of Fundraising and Operations at CHUF, said:**

"Scott House plays such an important part of Heart Families' lives when their little ones are undergoing treatment at The Freeman, especially during these extremely difficult times. The accommodation and facilities allow families to be close to their hospitalised Heart Heroes, and helps take away a significant amount of pressure and stress.

"We can't thank The Sick Children's Trust enough for their ongoing work to keep Scott House running,

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and we’re pleased to be able to gift the grant as we know it will make a big difference to so many lives.”

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

For further information about CHUF, please visit chuf.org.uk

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