Dad and friends complete national Three Peaks Challenge in just 27 hours to thank The Sick Children's Trust

Tuesday 19 September, 2017

A local dad, who was supported by The Sick Children's Trust when his newborn needed open heart surgery, has completed the National Three Peaks Challenge in just 27 hours along with seven friends, raising over £4,000 for the charity.

Christian Smith, 44, from Northampton, along with seven friends climbed the three highest peaks in England, Wales and Scotland on 1 September 2017. The group, who trained hard in preparation for the event, began the challenge on the Friday evening in Scotland, climbing 1345m Ben Nevis, followed by 978m Scafell Pike in England and finishing on Saturday night at 8pm with the complete descent of 1085m Snowdon in Wales. All took on the momentous challenge to raise both money and awareness for The Sick Children's Trust, a charity that supported Christian and his wife Lizzie with free 'Home from Home' accommodation at Guilford Street House in London when their baby, Jack, was seriously ill in hospital and needed lifesaving treatment.

Jack, who recently celebrated his second birthday, had a difficult start to life at Northampton Hospital when he had to be delivered by forceps and suffered from an extremely toxic condition known as meconium aspiration syndrome, where a baby inhales its first bowel movement during labour. As a result, Jack's airway was completely blocked and he was unable to breathe. Within minutes of being born, doctors had to revive Jack twice and he was later diagnosed with a collapsed lung and acute pneumonia. Over the following days, Jack was monitored for potential brain damage but seemed to grow stronger, so much so the doctors were confident he could be sent home.

However, Christian and Lizzie, 33, felt their world shatter when at just five days old Jack was diagnosed with aortic narrowing coarctation, a congenital heart condition where the aorta is too narrow and not enough oxygenated blood can circulate the body. With their baby growing weaker, Christian and Lizzie were told Jack needed immediate open heart surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital and he was put on an urgent waiting list for a bed. **Christian says:**

"Being told the news was such an odd feeling that to this day I still can't fully put my feelings into words. The wait for a bed seemed to take forever, but eventually when Jack was two weeks old, one became available and he was transferred immediately.

"Two hours later we found ourselves in the middle of London, overwhelmed and exhausted, standing on Waterloo Bridge whilst Jack underwent hours of surgery. We had no idea how long he would be in there for, or if our baby would even survive.

"We were so desperate to get to London and get the operation done we hadn't even thought about accommodation. The first night we were put into emergency accommodation by the hospital. At the time all we wanted was to be together and even though we knew it would be expensive, we reluctantly started looking at hotels nearby."

Thankfully, the next day, Christian and Lizzie were contacted by The Sick Children's Trust, which offered them a place to stay free of charge at its 'Home from Home' Guilford Street House, minutes from Jack's hospital bedside. **Christian continues:**

"We were so grateful, it was one less thing to worry about. We were expecting a little room, but instead we found ourselves in a gorgeous Georgian house with a huge kitchen, bathroom and bedroom that had a phone line direct to Jack's nurses' station in the hospital. Tina, the House Manager at Guilford Street, spoke to us and showed us around which was a welcome distraction while we were so worried about Jack.

"At a time of emotional turmoil, this house was an absolute godsend and just what we needed. It enabled us to have a good night's sleep and a place to escape to when the hospital became too much to bear, but also provided us with the reassurance that we were only a phone call or a stone's throw away from Jack. We are so grateful to The Sick Children's Trust and cannot thank them enough for everything that they did for us."

Guilford Street House is one of ten 'Homes from Home' run by The Sick Children's Trust. And although accommodation is provided free to parents with seriously ill children in hospital, it costs the charity £30 to

Media:







Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits ::

Related Keywords:

Charity :: Family Story :: Home From Home :: London :: Great Ormond Street Hospital :: Fundraising :: Children ::

Scan Me:

support a family for one night. **Christian, who gathered his friends to help him raise thousands of pounds for the charity, says:**

“We are all so pleased to have completed the challenge and raised money for families like mine. Although I’ll admit I am a bit disappointed that we didn’t make the 24 hour mark, as we were very unfortunate with traffic. It takes a long time to get from peak to peak which lost us a few hours, but even so it is a great achievement and we’ve made a difference to hundreds of families with seriously ill children in hospital By the end of the challenge, we were completely exhausted, but we did it for the charity and it was worth it.”

The Sick Children’s Trust runs ten ‘Homes from Home’ across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child’s hospital bedside. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations to keep its houses running. **Guilford House Manager, Tina Thake, says:**

“When I met Christian and Lizzie, it was touch and go with Jack and they were sick with worry. I am so pleased we were able to offer them accommodation and the emotional support they desperately needed at that terrible time.

“Christian has organised a fantastic fundraising event and the group have raised so much money for The Sick Children’s Trust. £4,000 will go a long way towards helping families in the future with seriously ill children in hospital. We are all so glad that Jack has made a full recovery and is excitedly awaiting the arrival of a new baby brother at the end of October!”

To get behind The Sick Children’s Trust and sponsor Christian Smith and his friends visit his Just Giving site https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/christian-smith11

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

Company Contact: