Dad laces up trainers to thank charity for ‘Home from Home’ when baby son was seriously ill

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The dad of a little boy who underwent major surgery at just one day old is lacing up his trainers to raise money for The Sick Children’s Trust.

Lewis Gamble-Thompson, 29 from Redcar, will be taking part in this year’s Great North Run on Sunday 10 September to raise money for The Sick Children’s Trust – a charity that supported him with free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation when his baby was born seriously ill.

At their 20 week scan, parents Lewis and Lucy Laverick were told that there was something wrong with their baby, Max. It was discovered that Max had a condition known as ‘double-bubble’ (duodenal atresia) where a blockage occurs between the bowel and stomach meaning nothing can pass through. The couple were told that their son would need an emergency operation immediately after he was born in Newcastle’s Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) – over an hour away from home.

Max underwent a two hour major operation and spent a fortnight undergoing treatment in the specialist hospital. During this time Lewis and Lucy were supported at Crawford House – free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation run by The Sick Children’s Trust. **Lewis, who has previously been ranked in the top ten best runners in the country, says:**

“When Max was born he was rushed straight to the high dependency unit (HDU). That first night was horrendous. We were separated from our baby and not quite sure what was happening. We had been told to expect that he’d be in hospital for around two weeks and we didn’t know what we’d do. We were an hour away from home and couldn’t face leaving our son.

“The next day, after having no sleep in a recliner chair and being awake with worry, we were given keys to Crawford House run by The Sick Children’s Trust. It was a lifesaver. Because of Crawford House I could be by Lucy and Max’s side every day and night, and Lucy could also spend a couple of nights away from the ward to get some rest.

“Without Crawford House I would’ve been stranded with nowhere to sleep, stay and eat. Crawford House allowed a difficult time to be made so much easier. There, I could recover and prepare for the next day ahead. It was a stressful situation and would’ve been made harder without somewhere to rest my head, refuel with homemade meals and have a break from the same four walls in the hospital. If I’d had to travel home every night and back to Newcastle every morning – I would never have had the peace of mind that Crawford House gave me, as I was never more than a few minutes from my family.

“After two weeks, we were allowed to bring Max home for the first time. His operation to bypass the blockage, so his stomach and bowel could work, went really well. Since being home he has now put on lots of weight, is very happy and enjoying life with no complications. You would never know that he had such a bumpy start to life!”

The Sick Children’s Trust runs ten ‘Homes from Home’ across the country supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. In Newcastle, the charity runs two ‘Homes from Home’ supporting families with children undergoing treatment at Freeman Hospital and the RVI. **Gail Stonley, Crawford House Manager, says:**

“It’s so lovely to hear that Max is well since leaving the hospital. And we are wishing Lewis the very best in the Great North Run. We hear he’s been training really hard and is trying to achieve a personal best which we hope he does!

“As a charity, we completely rely on voluntary donations to keep our houses running, it costs £30 to support a family in one of our ‘Homes from Home’ for one night, so we’d like to say a huge thank you to Lewis for fundraising for us.”

To support Lewis in his fundraising, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lewisgt

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

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