Dad walks marathon and raises £3,625 for charity who supported them after birth of baby son

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A local dad, whose baby boy was born with a duplex kidney and required specialist treatment at Sheffield Children's Hospital, has raised £3,625 by walking 26 miles for The Sick Children's Trust as thanks for keeping his family by their son's hospital bedside in free 'Home from Home' accommodation.

Richard Cheung, 43, from Matlock, and his wife, Jen, 41, felt their world collapse when they found out their baby boy, Noah, would be born with an abnormal kidney at their 20 week scan. Doctors told the worried couple that Noah's kidney was split into two sections with complicated pipework and blockages so it would not drain properly into his bladder.

Noah was born at Chesterfield Royal Hospital on 19 August 2016, and at just five days old was transferred to Sheffield Children's Hospital for an operation on his kidney. **Dad, Richard, who works as a Sales Director for a communications company, says:**

"I can't begin to tell you the emotions we went through. We were relieved that our son's condition would be treated, we were hopeful that after the operation he'd recover, and the operation would mean he'd be better. But we feared something could happen to our precious son, the most precious person in our lives. We didn't really know how long we'd be at Sheffield Children's Hospital, and it was an incredibly long way from home. We didn't want to leave Noah's side when he was just days old and going through major surgery, but sadly we thought this would be the only option which broke our hearts.

"Thankfully it wasn't. As soon as we arrived, the nurse assigned to us said she'd see if we could stay at Magnolia House. We didn't know what Magnolia House was, but soon we found out that it was the place that would keep us by our son's hospital bedside. The nurse explained that Magnolia House, alongside another place called Treetop House, was free 'Home from Home' accommodation for families with sick children being treated in the hospital, and that it was run by a charity called The Sick Children's Trust."

Richard and Jen initially stayed at Magnolia House for ten days, whilst Noah received the treatment he needed. They have since been supported by the charity on further occasions at both Magnolia and Treetop Houses, when Noah has returned to the specialist hospital for further operations. **Dad, Richard continues:**

"Noah has been back in hospital several times for further operations, most recently in January 2017 when he ended up on the intensive care unit and stayed in hospital for 16 days. But each time The Sick Children's Trust has been there for our family, giving us so much support.

"As time has gone on, and the more operations and infections Noah's had to overcome – it really has been difficult. One of the hardest things to see is the number of cannulas Noah's had to have during his short life, something I am sure other parents feel too. We are really hoping that Noah is on the mend – he gets stronger every day. We can already tell he will be a cheeky little monkey when he's older. Our concern right now is that nothing happens to his healthy kidney while all these treatments go on to help his left kidney.

"Throughout this traumatic journey, everyone had been so amazing and supportive. But we really don't know where we would be without the help of The Sick Children Trust. Ann and her team in Sheffield will forever be in our hearts. And I wanted to do some fundraising for the charity once Noah's condition improved and decided to walk a marathon."

Richard completed the Tissington and High Peaks Trails walk on 30 September and was joined by Jen and Noah on the final leg. And their family and friends from all over the world rallied together to raise vital funds for The Sick Children's Trust. **He continues:**

"I started the walk in high spirits and the first 12 miles were pretty enjoyable. At 18-20 miles I found it really difficult, plus the sideways rain for the last eight miles did not help! The last three miles were very achy and my normal strides shifted down a gear to more of a shuffle, but I am very happy to have achieved the finish and even happier to have raised support for such an amazing charity. We will be organising another challenge for The Sick Children's Trust in 2018."

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The Sick Children's Trust runs ten free 'Homes from Home' across the country supporting around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital every year. **Ann Wyatt, The Sick Children's Trust's Treetop and Magnolia House Manager, says:**

"It means so much to us when families like Noah's go home and fundraise to say thanks for keeping them together. It costs the charity £30 to support a family for a night in one of our ten 'Homes from Home' across the country.

"When a child is seriously ill it's vital that their loved ones are close by, and our 'Homes from Home' mean that families – like Richard's - are just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. So, we'd like to say thank you to Richard and all those who have supported him. The Cheung's generous donation will make a real difference."

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

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