Family and friends take on fundraising mission for ten year old Amy

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The friends and family of a little girl who is currently battling leukaemia have raised over £10,000 for The Sick Children's Trust as thanks for keeping her family by her side.

Ten year old Amy Botham, from Hull, was diagnosed with leukaemia in January this year and ever since has been undergoing treatment at Leeds General Infirmary (LGI) – over an hour away from home. Despite this, Amy has always had her family at her hospital bedside as they've been supported by The Sick Children's Trust – a charity which runs free 'Home from Home' accommodation for families with seriously ill children in hospital.

The charity is currently supporting Amy's parents Graham and Dawn and younger brother Harry at its Eckersley House, located within the hospital grounds. And to thank the charity for its support, Amy's family and friends have been tirelessly fundraising for The Sick Children's Trust, raising over £10,000. **Dad Graham says:**

"Before Amy was diagnosed, she had been poorly for a couple of months but doctors thought she might have a virus. It wasn't until she had blood tests that we discovered just how ill she was.

"Our lives changed dramatically when we found out Amy had leukaemia, there was a lot of worry and stress. We knew that the majority of her treatment would be in Leeds, but we didn't know how we would be able to be there for Amy and also her brother Harry. The thought of being in that situation was unbearable.

"Thankfully, a nurse told us about Eckersley House which is run by The Sick Children's Trust and throughout Amy's treatment we have been able to stay there. It has been amazing for us and means both Dawn and I can be with Amy at the time she needs her parents the most. It has also meant that Harry can come over at the weekends and holidays to see his sister which has really gives Amy a boost.

"Without Eckersley House, this situation would have been a nightmare. One of us would have had to travel to Leeds from Hull each day and that added stress would've been awful.

"Despite battling leukaemia every day, Amy keeps her spirits high. She is simply a lovely little girl who loves all animals – so much so she had started a pet club with her friends!"

Graham, along with several of his friends, took on the Hull Marathon in relay teams to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. Alongside this event, Amy's Uncle Kev organised a golf day and another friend, Andy Wigglesworth, took on an open water swim. **Family friend Mike Gooch, who ran in the marathon, says:**

"Graham is a very close friend of mine and when we found out about Amy earlier in the year we were all devastated. You just feel so helpless looking on from afar and don't want to bother the family for information.

"So I suggested to Graham and his brother that we could do the Hull Marathon for Amy as a four man relay team with some other friends – and the more we chatted about it the more friends wanted to join in!

"Originally our target was £100, and within three days we surpassed it. The support we've received is just incredible and we really hope we've made Amy proud. She's a wonderful little girl and what made the marathon so much better was that at the end of the first relay leg, Amy was there along with her brother.

"The support that The Sick Children's Trust has given Amy's family has been such a big help, and has meant the family can stay together and support each other during this time."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. Although the accommodation is provided free to families, it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. **Eckersley House Manager Jane McHale says:**

"We'd like to say a huge congratulations and thank you to everyone who has supported Amy's friends

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and family. As a charity, we are here to support families like Amy's when their child is in hospital. We're here to give them a space away from the hospital wards which is peaceful, warm and homely. Where they can rest their heads and enjoy a homemade meal while being just minutes from their child's hospital bedside.

"For the time Amy's in hospital, we will be there for her family and continue to wish her a speedy recovery."

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

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