Family fun day set to raise cash for two North East charities

Friday 29 April, 2016

The parents of a baby girl born with a hole comparable to the size of a grape in her heart are holding a family fun day fundraiser next month for The Sick Children's Trust and Freeman Hospital's Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF).

Lee Morris and Caroline Landess, from Middlesbrough, were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation by The Sick Children's Trust so that they could be just minutes from their daughter's bedside when she was admitted to Newcastle upon Tyne's Freeman Hospital. The couple are holding a family fun day on May 22 at Billingham Synthonia Football Club to raise much needed funds for both local charities to say thank you for supporting the family while Phoebe was in hospital.

Little Phoebe needed life-saving surgery - over an hour away from home - when doctors discovered a hole in her tiny heart. At just 12 weeks old, Phoebe underwent a heart operation in the specialist hospital, and during this time Lee and Caroline were provide with a room in The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House. Scott House is one of two 'Homes from Home' in Newcastle supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. **Dad Lee says:**

"After her operation, Phoebe spent a week recovering and to be honest, we were over at her bedside as much as possible. But without Scott House, we wouldn't have been able to do this. We live in Middlesbrough, and at the time I didn't drive so having to get the train or the bus would have been so time-consuming. I would have spent such little time with Phoebe.

"Scott House is a brilliant facility, giving parents the opportunity to be there with their sick child at any time, through the ups and the downs. Being able to go back, cook a meal and sit together – having a conversation outside the clinical environment of the hospital was really beneficial to our emotional wellbeing.

"Phoebe is now 14 months old and is doing really well at the moment; she's even beginning to take some steps and is pushing her baby doll around in her pram. Now that she's better, we want to say thank you to the charities that really helped us through that traumatic time."

The event, sponsored by Hillerby Developments Ltd, Northgate Vehicle Hire and Lemon Ltd, will be full of family entertainment, including a sponsored football match, an appearance from Silly Steve, live music and also a bouncy castle. All funds raised will go towards The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House and CHUF.

Scott House Manager Andrew Leadbitter says: "We're so grateful for all the fundraising Lee and his family are doing for The Sick Children's Trust - it costs on average £30 per night to support a family with a room in Scott House so that they can be by their sick child's hospital bedside. Having a 'Home from Home' for our families is something incredibly important to them, as not only does it provide practical support but it provides much needed emotional support too. And the funds Lee raises for The Sick Children's Trust will help the charity to give more families a 'Home from Home' while their child is seriously ill in hospital, keeping them together at these times."

The Family Fun Day will run from 10am – 4pm on Sunday 22 May, for further information please contact:charityfootballteesside@gmail.com

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