Family Fun Day To Be Held In Memory Of Baby Emma

Friday 28 April, 2017

The family of a little girl who passed away at just seven weeks old are holding a Big Chocolate Tea family fun day ten years on to raise money in her memory for The Sick Children's Trust and Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH).

In 2007, Jane and Neil Braddy experienced the heartbreak of losing their baby daughter, Emma. Emma bravely fought for her life for four weeks in GOSH but lost her battle to a rare virus - enteroviral myocarditis – which attacked her heart. During this time, her parents and older brother Oliver were supported in free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. Guilford Street House, which is one of ten 'Homes from Home' run by the charity, meant Emma's family were just a few minutes' walk from her hospital bedside, and meant that Emma was never alone throughout her battle.

Since their tragic loss, Emma's family – including her brothers Oliver, James and Frank – have been fundraising in her memory for The Sick Children's Trust and GOSH. Every year, they host a Big Chocolate Tea event to help The Sick Children's Trust support thousands more families with 'Home from Home' accommodation when their loved one is seriously ill in hospital.

Mum Jane hopes that by sharing Emma's story, not only will it help raise money for the charities, but will give other parents hope. She says:

"When we lost Emma, we were left with a hole in our lives that could never be filled. There was just a black, bottomless pit of hopelessness.

"I was desperately looking for someone who had been through this, someone who was ten years on and who could tell me life would be worth living again. I just wanted to know that we could be happy again, that there was still joy out there. I needed hope. Now I have become the woman that I'd been searching for. It is ten years since Emma died and not only have we survived, but we have experienced happiness and joy. Knowing that this is a message that families like us want and need to hear is something that has spurred me on to host the charity events we have done since Emma passed away."

This year's event will be held on Saturday 13 May at Stanford in the Vale Village Hall from midday until 5pm to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust and the critical care unit at GOSH. **Jane continues:**

"When Emma was in hospital, we needed to be close to her as we never knew when she would deteriorate. We had nowhere to stay so when The Sick Children's Trust offered us a room at Guilford Street House it was a lifeline. We had a home where we could be together and bring our 16 month old son. I don't know how we would've coped without this wonderful help.

"By fundraising, good can come out of tragedy. When I share Emma's story with someone a small part of her is carried with them and that has a great healing power. Seeing families and children playing and enjoying themselves together at our events fills us with hope and reminds us how precious event moment is.

"I've experienced fantastic generosity, kindness and empathy from family, friends and complete strangers. If this happens in my daughter's name, then what better way to celebrate her short life?"

Big Chocolate Tea is The Sick Children's Trust's biggest annual fundraising campaign. Last year, Big Chocolate Tea raised £60,000 – enough to support 2,000 families with 'Home from Home' accommodation. The Sick Children's Trust is hoping it will be an even bigger success this year. **Guilford Street House Manager Tina Thake says:**

"Jane and her family are inspirational. Every year they hold a Big Chocolate Tea to raise money in Emma's memory and we're always so humbled that they choose to support us.

"The Sick Children's Trust supports families when they are going through incredibly difficult times, and we are there to help ease some of the worries families have by keeping them together, by their child's side in free 'Home from Home' accommodation.

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“Although the accommodation is provided free of charge, it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. Jane’s family fun days and continued support have already gone a long way in supporting families when their child is seriously ill in hospital, and we can’t thank them enough for that.”

For more information on Jane’s event, please visit: http://funday.braddy.net

For further information on how to get involved with Big Chocolate Tea, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea

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