Family Fundraisers Abseiling to Thank Charity for Support

Friday 29 July, 2016

A driven family and their friends will be abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth to raise £1000 for a charity that provided support and a place to stay while their daughter was seriously ill in hospital.

Julie Mitchell and her three children will be joined by six friends on 20 August to descend the 100 metre tall tower in Portsmouth, in an effort to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust, a charity that provides free 'Home from Home' accommodation and support to the families of sick children.

The Sick Children's Trust has a special meaning to the Mitchell family. In 2003, Julie's ten-year-old daughter Rebecca was rushed to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) in London for three months of specialist treatment after becoming seriously ill with pneumonia and septicaemia. The family were able to stay at one of The Sick Children's Trust's free 'Homes from Home', Guilford Street House, located just a few minutes from GOSH. **Julie, who has fundraised in the past for The Sick Children's Trust by skydiving, says**:

"The worst thing ever was being told we needed to say our goodbyes. How did it come to this, our loving, caring and beautiful girl becoming so fragile? We couldn't believe that we were being told this could be the last time we'd see her. Rebecca was at GOSH for around three months. For the first few nights, I slept on a chair outside her room - she was that ill we couldn't even sleep in there with her.

"Then someone approached us with the best news ever, we'd been given a room at Guilford Street House, run by The Sick Children's Trust. The positive impact it has on you at that time is indescribable. To have somewhere you can go to get away from the hospital, where your other children can go, where you can talk to people and share your story. You need it so much.

"It really was our 'Home from Home'. I only went back once to our family home during that time, and without Guilford Street House I could've easily become institutionalised with spending so much time at the hospital. Guilford Street gave my partner Nick and I a break, and it meant we had somewhere for our other children to come and stay on weekends. We were able to sit with them and have a normal family meal and even pop to the park. But the most important thing was that we were all there for Rebecca, which made a huge difference."

Julie is now a proud grandmother as Rebecca, now 23, last year gave birth to a healthy son, Oscar, inspiring the family to fundraise again for the charity which helped them thirteen years ago. The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the UK, supporting around 4,000 families a year. While accommodation is free, it costs the charity £30 per night, to support a family whose child is in hospital.

If you would like to support Julie and her family, please visit https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Julie-Mitchell21.

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