# Family go above and beyond to show support for The Sick Children's Trust

**Tuesday 1 August, 2017**

A grateful uncle, whose sister was supported by The Sick Children's Trust when her four year old daughter was seriously ill, has chosen to fly the flag for the charity at the first ever Bedford Half Marathon.

Great British Long Distance Runner Mark Draper's niece, Erin, was only three years old when she was diagnosed with a serious case of pneumonia. An X-ray at Bedford Hospital confirmed that she was also suffering with empyema, which meant that her entire right lung was filled with fluid that was solidifying. As a result, Erin was put into an induced coma and rushed to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge to the paediatric intensive care unit (PICU).

Erin underwent emergency treatment to have her lung drained and medication injected in her side to remove the solid mass. She was also given very strong antibiotics, and kept on a ventilator for eight days. Whilst she was being treated in hospital Erin's worried parents Jo and Adrian Haigh were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation at Acorn House, minutes from their daughter's hospital bedside. **Mum, Jo, says:**

"On our way to Addenbrooke's we talked about where we would stay, knowing that neither of us would leave Erin's side. But as soon as she was settled in PICU and being treated, the nurse told us we had somewhere to stay. We assumed it would be a small side room with a sofa, like the previous evening in Bedford Hospital, but instead we were given directions to Acorn House.

"Acorn House was amazing. It meant that we could stay with Erin, all together, the whole time through this incredibly stressful experience. We even had our other two daughters visit and stay with us there, which was so important to us as our youngest daughter was only ten months old and needed her parents.

"When Erin woke up she suffered severe withdrawals from the medication she had received to keep her asleep. She was hallucinating which was agonising for us to witness and we felt helpless. But what made this situation better was that she was well enough to be taken out of the hospital, away from the ward and to come back with us to Acorn House for food or to see her sisters. It was a real comfort."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. **Uncle Mark, whose company, MCD events, has organised the Bedford Half, adds:**

"I am really close to Jo and my nieces and it was terrible to see how ill Erin was, but when I visited them all at Acorn House I knew the emotional and mental support they were receiving from Abi and her team helped them stay strong.

"It was a really easy decision for us to choose The Sick Children's Trust as our associated charity for the race and we are really keen to get as many people as possible fundraising, running and raising awareness for the fantastic work The Sick Children's Trust does. The charity helped my sister and our entire family when they needed it most and we are thrilled to be helping to raise their profile."

Those who take part in the Bedford Half Marathon on Saturday 2 September and fundraise for The Sick Children's Trust will receive a free official Sick Children's Trust running vest, plus a full supporter pack and on-going support from the charity's fundraising team. **Community Fundraising Manager, Elisa Cappello-Dowd, says:**

"This is an excellent opportunity to get behind The Sick Children's Trust and take part in a fantastic race. Whilst accommodation provided by the charity is free for the families, it costs us around £30 to support a family for one night. We rely entirely on voluntary income to meet this cost and The Sick Children's Trust is delighted to be the official charity partner for the Bedford Half Marathon in 2017."

To find out more about the race visit http://www.bedfordhalf.co.uk/ or if you are interested in running for The Sick Children's Trust please email elisa@sickchildrenstrust.org or call 020 3786 2429.

More information about The Sick Children's Trust can be found at: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org

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