# Family raise £8,000 in memory of three year old son

**Wednesday 11 October, 2017**

The family of a little boy who sadly passed away last year have raised £8,000 in his memory for three charities which supported them.

The Lavric family, from Cleethorpes, have been on a fundraising mission for The Sick Children's Trust, TOFs and The Children's Hospital Charity as thanks for supporting them throughout their son Reuben's life.

When Reuben was born, he was diagnosed with a birth defect called tracheoesophageal fistula / oesophageal atresia (TOF/OA) where there's an abnormal connection between the oesophagus and trachea. At a week old, he was admitted to Sheffield Children's Hospital for surgery to repair the connection. Three years later, Reuben was readmitted to the specialist hospital – over 70 miles away from home – after being diagnosed with *hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis* (HLH) – a rare condition where the body makes too many activated immune cells. Despite courageously fighting for many months, Reuben passed away in August 2016.

While he was in hospital, his family – parents Peter, Annis and brother Isaac – were supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. The charity's 'Home from Home' is located on the top floor of Sheffield Children's Hospital and is just a lift ride away from the wards. During the last few weeks of his life, Reuben's family were only ever minutes from his hospital bedside because of the free accommodation. And over the last year the family have raised £4,223 alone for The Sick Children's Trust. **Dad Peter, who has just completed the Great North Run for the charities, says:**

"The Sick Children's Trust, TOFs and The Children's Hospital Charity are the three charities that really helped Reuben and us as a family. We were supported by The Sick Children's Trust's Treetop House for months and it really helped relieve some of the stress you experience when your child is so poorly in hospital. By having Treetop House, we didn't have to make the 90 minute journey to the hospital and back home every day – we didn't have to leave Reuben when he really needed us to be there. And it also meant that Reuben's brother could come to visit and stay over – which meant we could ensure he got to spend some time with his brother alongside us.

"Since Reuben passed away, we have put a lot of effort into thanking these amazing three charities for their support. Earlier this month I did my first half marathon – something that I never thought I'd do. But I did it. It was really emotional and whenever I struggled I thought of my son, who fought so bravely.

"Last year, Isaac who was only six years old at the time, did a 20 mile sponsored walk over two days which raised over £4,000, and my wife Annis has also been doing lots, including the Great North Swim and holding a Big Chocolate Tea party for The Sick Children's Trust.

"We have also had a lot of help from people we know. My employers, who were so supportive during Reuben's time in hospital, selected The Sick Children's Trust as charity of the year which has meant so much to our family. And Scartho Nursery School, which Reuben attended, held a Minion's Day in his memory as he absolutely loved the Minions! Everyone got involved and raised £1,050. The nursery even received a donated wooden boat from Newby Leisure, a company who design playgrounds, in Reuben's name which is very special.

"Both TOF/OA and HLH are very rare and we want to do what we can as a family to raise awareness of these conditions and the charities which supported us. We hope that by doing so, families who are going through a similar situation will get the support and help they need."

The Sick Children's Trust's runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. In Sheffield there are two – Treetop and Magnolia Houses – which give families with sick children at Sheffield Children's Hospital free, high quality accommodation close to their child's hospital bedside. **Treetop and Magnolia Assistant House Manager, Rachel Yates, says**:

"On behalf of all the families we support and everyone at The Sick Children's Trust we'd like to thank Peter, Annis and Isaac for supporting us during this time. With thanks to all of Reuben's friends and families who have been fundraising in his memory, hundreds more families have been able to remain close to their seriously ill child."

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