FAMILY RAISES OVER £20,000 FOR SICK CHILDREN'S TRUST

Monday 31 October, 2016

The family of a little boy who tragically passed away at just seven weeks old has raised over £20,000 for The Sick Children's Trust with the help of her friends, family and colleagues.

Grandmother Christine Varty, from Whickham, was delighted when her first grandson Alfie was born in 2013. Despite being born a healthy baby, at just over four weeks old Alfie stopped breathing and was rushed to Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It wasn't long before doctors realised Alfie needed specialist treatment and he was transferred to Newcastle upon Tyne's Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI). For over two weeks Alfie was treated at the specialist children's hospital before sadly losing his battle.

The Purvis family - Alfie's mum Katy, dad Tony, and sisters Leah and Abby - were all supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. Crawford House is located just a few minutes' walk from the RVI which meant that Alfie's family- from Marley Hill - could be with him within minutes opposed to hours. **Christine, whose colleagues at BHS helped raise further fund for The Sick Children's Trust's, says:**

"Crawford House gave my family a chance to stay together. Leah and Abby were very young at the time and it gave them stability during a traumatic time. They could have meals with their mummy and daddy, they had somewhere to play and also they had somewhere to sleep while only ever being a couple of minutes away from their beloved baby brother, Alfie.

"Katy wanted to say thank you to The Sick Children's Trust for helping her when she needed it the most and she wanted to raise something towards helping another family. We had never heard of Crawford House prior to Alfie going into hospital but we are so thankful it was there and able to help us. Children are very precious and you never want them to be ill, but when your child is very poorly, The Sick Children's Trust offers invaluable help and support at a time when your life can be turned upside down without warning.

"Our first fundraiser was a huge success, and from there it snowballed. We have now reached £20,500 and this has been raised with the help of family, friends and my colleagues at BHS. We've had everything from boxing show to raffles and it's been fantastic to see how everyone has come together in Alfie's memory – we're very touched. "

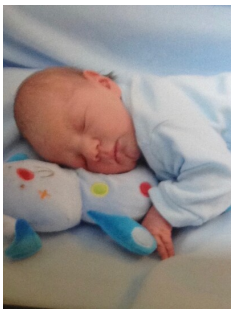
Christine, along with her colleagues at BHS, presented Crawford House Manager Gail with their final fundraising cheque on the store's last day of opening in August. **Gail says:**

"It was so sad seeing the shutters go down for the last time and the staff all hugging and crying, but we are so thankful to them all for supporting Christine and her family in Alfie's memory.

"The money Alfie's family have raised, with everyone else's help, has already started to make a significant difference to many families who have needed a 'Home from Home' when their child has been seriously ill in hospital. It costs us £30 to support a family at Crawford House for one night and we completely rely on voluntary donations to make this happen, so we are incredibly grateful for everyone's support."

To find out more about The Sick Children's Trust and its ten 'Homes from Home' around the country, please visit www.sickchildrenstrust.org.

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