Family who spent Christmas at daughter's hospital bedside front charity appeal to raise vital funds for families with seriously ill children

Monday 19 November, 2018

A Sacriston family have shared their emotional experience of spending their daughter's first Christmas in hospital as she underwent lifesaving heart surgery to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust.

Paul and Hannah Foster front The Sick Children's Trust's Christmas appeal 'My Christmas Wish' encouraging the nation to donate £30 to ensure that at least one child in hospital wakes up on Christmas morning with their family by their side.

In 2016, Amelia was born with a large hole in her heart and an aortic narrowing and was transferred to Newcastle's Freeman Hospital where she underwent major heart surgery, but required further surgery later that year. Amelia was taken to theatre just days before Christmas, and spent the festive season recovering in hospital, miles away from home. However, the couple along with their eldest daughter, Ellie, were supported by The Sick Children's Trust in free 'Home from Home' accommodation located within the hospital grounds, meaning they were still able to celebrate Christmas together as a family at Amelia's hospital bedside. The family want to ensure that others with seriously ill children in hospital are able to spend their Christmas together and have shared their experience in The Sick Children's Trust's Christmas appeal. **Paul says:**

"Because of Scott House we were able to spend Christmas together, as a family, something that should never be taken away from anyone.

"Originally, Amelia's operation was scheduled for the end of December. But we received a call to say that there had been a cancellation and they wanted Amelia in. This meant we would be spending our first Christmas with Amelia in hospital – and Ellie would be spending it away from us. It was really emotional, because on the one hand we were relieved our baby's surgery was happening soon, but on the other our family was going to be separated on the most special day of the year. We felt torn and heartbroken.

"Hospital life this time round was a lot tougher. But with thanks to the amazing staff at Freeman Hospital and The Sick Children's Trust it was much easier. We didn't have to leave Ellie with her grandparents and spend Christmas without her because of Scott House, where we could be together as a family and stay while Amelia was being treated in hospital. And it really did lift so much pressure off our shoulders.

"Spending Christmas in hospital can be an extremely upsetting time, but the nurses at Freeman Hospital and the team at Scott House made it so special for all of us. The nurses on the paediatric intensive care unit would sit with Amelia and Ellie to make sure they were 'tracking Santa' in the days leading up to Christmas. And on Christmas Eve, we popped Ellie's presents under the Christmas tree in Scott House, so on Christmas morning, she woke up with all the excitement a little girl should. Santa had managed to find out where she was living, despite her worrying that he wouldn't know."

The Foster family spent eight days at Scott House over Christmas until Amelia was discharged home. Since then Amelia has gone from strength to strength and looks forward to Santa's visit this year. Her parents hope that by sharing their experience that they can help to raise £13,230 – enough to cover the costs of running The Sick Children's Trust's ten 'Homes from Home' over the festive period. **Paul continues:**

"My Christmas Wish is that any other family who finds themselves in a similar position to us is able to receive the support we did from The Sick Children's Trust. So they know that they've got a place to stay so close to their child and will be so well looked after in their time of need."

This Christmas, The Sick Children's Trust expects that every room across its ten 'Homes from Home' will be full with families who are caring for some of the UK's sickest children. **Head of Operations, Joy Darling, says:**

"No child should wake up on Christmas morning alone and without their family around them. But this will be the reality for many poorly children in hospital as their families face long journeys to be by their hospital bedside on the most magical day of the year.

"A donation of £30 will give a family a place to stay in one of our 'Homes from Home' this Christmas,

Media:













Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Children & Teenagers :: Christmas ::

Related Keywords:

Christmas Appeal :: The Sick Children's Trust :: County Durham :: Durham :: Freeman Hospital :: Scott House :: Heart Warrior :: Heart Surgery ::

just moments from their sick child's bedside. £30 will ensure one child in hospital will wake up on Christmas morning with their family by their side.

"It costs The Sick Children's Trust £13,230 to run its ten 'Homes from Home' across the country over the Christmas period, keeping families together at one of the most important times of the year. By donating £30 you can make a sick child's Christmas wish come true and ensure they wake up with lots of kisses and cuddles."

You can watch Paul share his experience by visiting The Sick Children's Trust's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT55Efu28g4

To donate to The Sick Children's Trust Christmas appeal visit:

- The Sick Children's Trust's Christmas Wish JustGiving page: https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/mychristmaswish
- Or call the team on 020 7638 4066

For further information about The Sick Children's Trust, please visit http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/

Scan Me:

Company Contact: