# ‘Give The Gift of Togetherness’ mum’s message to others this Christmas

**Wednesday 20 November, 2019**

A mum who was able to stay by her baby’s hospital bedside because of The Sick Children’s Trust is sharing her story at the charity’s Christmas Carol Service to ask others to give the gift of togetherness this Christmas.

Marlo Rankin was devastated to find out at 34 weeks pregnant that her daughter, Mabel, had a diaphragmatic hernia – a hole in the diaphragm which led to her organs moving into her chest cavity. The condition left Mabel with just a 50% chance of survival and meant she needed to be delivered at The Royal London Hospital – over 20 miles away from home – for lifesaving treatment.

For nine weeks the couple were supported by The Sick Children’s Trust, the charity which gives families with sick children in hospital a place to stay just minutes from their child’s hospital bedside. During this time, Mabel underwent major surgery and was diagnosed with another condition but because of the charity’s ‘Home from Home’ Stevenson House she had her parents and older brother with her every step of the way.

Two years on, Mabel is doing really well and to thank The Sick Children’s Trust Marlo is sharing her story at the charity’s annual Christmas Carol Service in London on Wednesday 11 December. **Marlo, from Upminster, said:**

“What makes The Sick Children’s Trust’s ‘Homes from Home’ so special is the combination of benefits staying there brings. It’s not just the fact that you’re minutes from your child’s bedside, or the amazing team on hand, it’s being surrounded by other families who have children in hospital too. The sense of solidarity is what helps you get through the tough days.

“Mabel is doing really well now, she is a very happy and curious little girl who is adored by her parents and big brother. We have continued to stay in touch with The Sick Children’s Trust and want to help give other families with a child in hospital a place to stay and the same support we received.

“All sick children should be with their family at Christmas and with help from The Sick Children’s Trust their families won’t have to worry about where they’ll stay. I hope by sharing my story I can inspire people to donate £30 to give a family the gift of togetherness this year.”

The Sick Children’s Trust is the charity that gives families with a seriously ill child in hospital a comfortable place to stay and a friendly ear to listen across its ten ‘Homes from Home’. The charity’s Christmas Carol Service takes place on Wednesday 11 December at St Marylebone Parish Church, London. Tickets are £15 (adults) and £7.50 (children). All money will go directly to giving families somewhere to stay together just minutes from the hospital. **Chief Executive of The Sick Children’s Trust, Jane Featherstone, said:**

“It costs us £30 to support a family for one night. £30 gives a family so much more than just a roof over their heads when their child is in hospital. £30 gives them someone to talk to, and a calm place to rest with their family and will mean they can be together at Christmas. By attending our Christmas Carol Service you will help make that happen.”

To find out more about The Sick Children’s Trust Christmas Carol Service visit: sickchildrenstrust.org/events

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