GRANDPARENTS CYCLING PASSION RAISES THOUSANDS TO HELP FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL STAY TOGETHER

Tuesday 20 October, 2020

A devoted Grandad and Granny have clocked up 2,000 miles on their bikes raising £2,000 for The Sick Children's Trust to thank the charity for giving their daughter a place to stay when their granddaughter was in hospital.

Dave and Sue Mercer, from Bexhill-on-Sea, have embarked on a number of epic cycles including John O'Groats to Lands End and most recently My Ride London to thank the charity for keeping their daughter's family together on multiple occasions.

Louise Maurais and her husband Sam were given a place to stay at The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House in Newcastle-upon-Tyne when their then eight week old daughter, Bridget, was diagnosed with several heart problems. Bridget has undergone three major surgeries at Freeman Hospital, including a full heart reconstruction and more recently to have a pace maker fitted. Over the last three years, while Louise and Sam have lived in both Whitby and Bexhill-On-Sea, they have never had to be away from their daughter's hospital bedside because of The Sick Children's Trust's 'Homes from Home'. Grandparents Dave and Sue, who looked after their eldest granddaughter Caitlin throughout these times, were so grateful for the charity's support that they have saddled up to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. **Dave said:**

"As a Granny and Grandad we know how having a child in hospital affects the whole family and want to make sure that for other parents and grandparents that the time is as easy as possible.

"When we suddenly found out about Bridget's complications she was just eight weeks old, and Louise and Sam lived in Whitby with their eldest daughter, Caitlin. They were already out on a limb as families on both sides hail from Sussex, so there was no one up there to support them.

"A slight relief we had as Louise's parents was finding out that a charity had given her and Sam a place to stay. The Sick Children's Trust gave them keys to a room in its 'Home from Home' Scott House which meant they didn't have to drive back home, leave Bridget's side or each other. It made the world of difference to Sue and I knowing that they were up there in Newcastle and local. We would've been doubly concerned if they'd been travelling to the hospital and back every day and night. As a whole family, it meant a great deal.

"As grandparents and parents we tried to do as much we could (and can) to support Sam and Louise, but equally try and give something back. It was so important to them to have a place to stay, it was so important to us and we want to be able to provide that support to others, and God forbid if Louise needs the charity's help again."

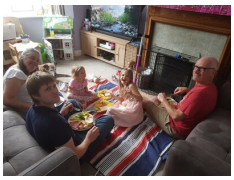
It costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 to support a family for one night. £30 gives a family so much more than just a roof over their heads when their child is in hospital. £30 gives them someone to talk to, and a calm place to rest with their family. **Bridget's mum, Louise, added:**

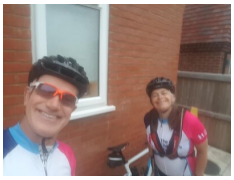
"Freeman Hospital is a day's drive from our home and knowing that when we get there, we can stay at Scott House makes that journey much more bearable as it is a place that is familiar to us. It is such a valuable resource for us to have as we are only ever just a few minutes' walk away rather than hours. When Bridget had her pacemaker fitted, we stayed there for two weeks – I can't imagine what we would've done for two weeks without it."

No parent with a seriously ill child in hospital should have to worry about how they can be by their bedside. The Sick Children's Trust makes sure families can be together. **Charlotte Coldrey, Community Fundraising Officer, said:**

"We are over the moon with the continued support that we've received from Dave and Sue, especially this year when they took on the My Ride London when the event was cancelled. This year we expect to lose 25-30% of our income, so support like theirs is truly incredible."

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