Grateful dad turns Total Warrior to raise cash for children's charity

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The dedicated dad of a baby boy who required lifesaving treatment 98 miles away from home is getting ready to take on the challenging Total Warrior obstacle course next month to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust.

David James, 32, from Whitehaven, is on a fundraising mission to thank the charity for giving him free 'Home from Home' accommodation just minutes from his baby Archie's hospital bedside when he was rushed to the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle upon Tyne.

When Archie was born he wasn't breathing and was immediately resuscitated. And although doctors were able to stabilise him, just two hours later he started having seizures. The newborn baby was rushed from West Cumberland Hospital to Newcastle's RVI – miles away from his family home. On arrival at the specialist paediatric hospital, Archie underwent several tests before having an MRI scan two days later which revealed that he'd had a stroke. Whilst he was being treated on the special care baby unit (SCBU), David was given a room at The Sick Children's Trust's 'Home from Home' Crawford House, located just minutes from Archie's incubator. **Dad David, who works in the nuclear industry, says:**

"When Archie was born, lifeless and unresponsive, my whole world went dark. Up until this point we'd had no complications so to suddenly be faced with the prospect that our son might not live was too much to comprehend. We were over the moon when Archie started breathing on his own, but we knew there was more to come once the seizures started. It was heart wrenching.

"Everything felt out of my control. Emma was taken to the postnatal ward at RVI and Archie was admitted to SCBU. I was at a loss. During this traumatic time though, The Sick Children's Trust held out a hand to me and gave me keys to Crawford House, free 'Home from Home' accommodation just a few minutes' walk from the hospital.

"I can honestly say that Crawford House became my rock. If it wasn't for the house, I would've had to travel over four hours every day to be with my wife and son which would've been stressful and exhausting. Having that private room as a base to come back to every evening was a godsend."

Crawford House is located within the hospital grounds and is one of ten 'Homes from Home' run by The Sick Children's Trust. And for five days it became a 'Home from Home' for David before Emma and Archie were discharged. Although it is still unknown whether the stroke has resulted in any long term damage, doctors have predicted that Archie has a 90% chance of making a full recovery. Seven months on, Archie has inspired his dad to take on the pinnacle of obstacle courses, along with 17 friends from Millom Rugby Union Club, to thank The Sick Children's Trust for its support. **David, who hopes to raise over £1,000, continues:**

"I knew I had to give something back to the charity that provided so much support when we needed it most. Given the noble cause, it was easy to persuade 17 of my friends to take on Total Warrior with me to fundraise.

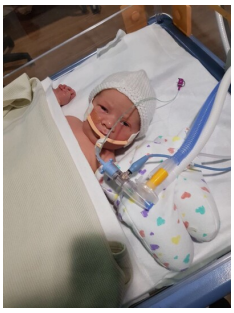
"I've never done anything like this before and I'm feeling quite nervous about the challenge so it will be great to tackle it as a group. Emma and Archie will be there to cheer me on and I know that when I see them it'll make me even more determined to complete the challenge!"

Every year, The Sick Children's Trust supports around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital, keeping them close to their loved one's hospital bedside. Over the last year, Crawford House has helped nearly 700 families from the North East and beyond stay together while their child receives specialist treatment at the RVI. **Crawford House Manager, Andrew Leadbitter, says:**

"Everyone at The Sick Children's Trust is delighted to hear that Archie is making a good recovery and doing well after such a scary start to life. We'd like to say a huge thank you to David and his friends for supporting the charity by taking on Total Warrior in August. The money they raise will make a huge difference and enable us to support more families who need a 'Home from Home' when their child is seriously ill in hospital. We wish them all the best of luck and encourage other supporters to take on their own challenge!"

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To read more about David’s fundraising mission, please visit his fundraising page at: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/david-james69

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

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