Grateful mother runs Bedford Half to thank The Sick Children's Trust

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Media:









A local mum who was supported by The Sick Children's Trust when one of her twin baby girls was seriously ill has raised £1,700 for the charity.

Nicola Kermez, 33, from Norwich, ran The Bedford Half Marathon on 2 September 2017 along with her friend Jennifer Boyle to thank The Sick Children's Trust for supporting her family when their daughter Bella was rushed to a hospital 60 miles away from home.

Last Christmas, Nicola and husband Mark woke up to find six month old Bella with flu-like symptoms. Over the course of Christmas Day, Bella got progressively worse and on Boxing Day became extremely pale and unresponsive. Her parents rushed her to A&E at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital where she was diagnosed with respiratory failure and bronchiolitis. **Nicola says:**

"When we arrived at A&E, the nurses were immediately concerned. It was really scary as she was swooped from my arms and the nurse ran with her into the respiratory department where she was surrounded by doctors. The whole thing is a blur. All I remember is asking the doctor again and again whether Bella would be ok."

Overnight Bella's condition deteriorated and a chest X-ray revealed she had a collapsed lung. **Nicola continues:**

"The doctors raced Bella into the operating theatre to have an emergency chest drain. My husband and I were distraught. Our baby was six months old and too small to be going through this horrendous experience. She was so distressed and it was heart-wrenching to watch, but we remained positive that she would pull through. Luckily, the surgery went well and Bella was sedated whilst we waited for the children's acute transfer service (CATS) to collect her and take her to specialist Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge."

On arrival at the hospital, Nicola and Mark were told that there was a room available for them to use just minutes from their baby's hospital bedside at Acorn House, free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. **Nicola, who was reluctant to leave Bella's side, adds:**

"The doctors and nurses assured us that Bella would be well looked after and that we needed to rest and be strong for our daughter. There was a phone in our room with direct access to the ward which made me feel a lot better. And when we arrived at Acorn House we were blown away. The rooms were spacious, clean and tidy and the facilities were outstanding, with a lounge, play area, kitchen and a number of bathrooms all of which was at no cost to us.

"We stayed at Acorn House for five nights and it was such a relief to have a base so close to our daughter. It also meant that Bella's twin sister Gracie and older sister Layla could visit with our family, which made such a difference to all our daughters' well-being.

"We are so grateful for the support and help from Abi and her team. It was also a great comfort to meet and talk to other parents who were staying in the Acorn House, they helped us around the house showing us where everything was and shared their stories with us which did us the world of good."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations and it costs £30 to support a family for one night. **Acorn House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal, says:**

"We are so grateful to Nicola for fundraising for us and it is so important for The Sick Children's Trust to support more families who need a 'Home from Home' when their child is seriously ill in hospital.

"When we met Nicola and Mark, over what should have been their first happy Christmas with their twin daughters, they were distraught and we are so glad Acorn House was such a comfort to them.

"We are all thrilled that Bella made a full recovery and it was lovely to see the pictures of her and Gracie celebrating their first birthday in June."

To get behind The Sick Children’s Trust and sponsor Nicola visit her Just Giving site https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nicola-kermez1

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



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