Grateful parents share story to thank charity for ‘Home from Home’ at carol service

Friday 30 November, 2018

A Tendring family will take centre stage at The Sick Children’s Trust Christmas Carol Service on Wednesday 12 December to tell over 700 people the difference the charity’s free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation made to them when their newborn son was rushed to a hospital over 80 miles away from home for lifesaving surgery.

Mark and Poppy Dean, from Walton-on-the-Naze experienced every parent’s nightmare when their son, David, was rushed to The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge at just a few hours old. Shortly after his birth at Colchester General, David experienced a number of seizures and needed immediate, specialist medical attention. For five days, David fought for his life on the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and was then transferred back to Colchester before being discharged and taken home for the first time at just a week old. During his treatment in Cambridge, the couple were given free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation at Chestnut House, run by The Sick Children’s Trust.

On Wednesday 12 December, the family will travel to London’s St Marylebone Parish Church to share their story at the annual Carol Service to highlight the importance of The Sick Children’s Trust’s work. **Mark says:**

“Without The Sick Children’s Trust, the already overwhelming circumstances would have been a lot worse.

“We had only been with David for a few hours before he was taken away from us and rushed to The Rosie Hospital. It had been a difficult birth and Poppy needed care herself, so it wasn’t until the following morning that we were able to be with David. It was an incredibly worrying time as nobody knew what was causing the seizures and what was wrong.

“It felt like our whole world had been turned upside. Everything was just so unexpected. But in the midst of all the chaos and uncertainty, The Sick Children’s Trust held out a hand and gave us a place to stay, which was just minutes from our son’s side. This meant we could see David at any time we wanted, day or night, without having to make the four hour round trip to and from the hospital. We could hold his little hand throughout it all.

“We can’t ever thank The Sick Children’s Trust enough for the support it gave us. It made such a worrying time manageable. We’ve raised over £6,000 for the charity to say thank you, but want to share our story at the Christmas Carol Service so that more people can see and understand the real impact that their donations make to families like ours.”

David’s Mum, Poppy, adds: “After arriving at David’s bedside in NICU, a nurse handed us a key to a room at Chestnut House. From that moment it felt as if a weight had been lifted from our shoulders, now all our focus could be on David without the added worry of how we’d make it to the hospital each day or having to pay out for a hotel. We had no idea how long David would need treatment for, but we were told The Sick Children’s Trust would be there for us. It was amazing to have somewhere so comfortable to stay, and neither of us can thank the charity enough. Each and every donation is gratefully appreciated and means families can be close to their children.”

The Sick Children’s Trust Christmas Carol Service will be held at St Marylebone Parish Church on Wednesday 12 December at 6:30pm. Mark, Poppy and David, now two years old, will join eight celebrity guests including Alan Carr, Anthea Turner, Ben Aldridge, Danny Webb, Emma Fielding, Jon Richardson, Steven Mackintosh and Tim Downie who will all delight guests with festive readings. Attendees will also enjoy magical performances from Irish Soprano Margaret Keys and Coloratura Soprano Chrissy Johnston. Tickets cost £15 (adults) and £7.50 (children). **Hannah Upson, Special Events and Celebrity Engagement Manager, says:**

“The Sick Children’s Trust Christmas Carol Service is our much-loved event of the year and we’re delighted that Mark and Poppy will share their story on the evening. We hope to raise over £15,000 which will go towards keeping more families, like David’s, together in comfortable and close accommodation.

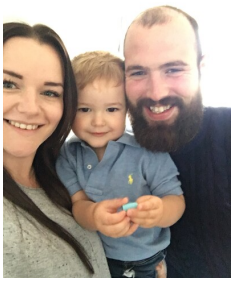
“This year we have a fantastic celebrity line-up, so tickets are selling fast! If you’d like to come along, please give the team a call on 020 7638 4066 or visit our website.”

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To buy tickets, go to:
https://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/Get_involved/Special_Events/ChristmasCarolService2017/index.html

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