Keen runner to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust to thank them for supporting close friends

Thursday 12 April, 2018

A keen runner is preparing to take on this month's Virgin Money London Marathon and the epic Grand Union Canal 145 mile Race in May to raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust on behalf of her friends, who were supported by the charity after the birth of their first child last year.

Vicky Irvine, 34, from Southend-On-Sea, is training hard to complete the London Marathon, followed by the Grand Union Canal Race, in a bid to raise both money and awareness for The Sick Children's Trust. The charity, which runs free 'Home from Home' accommodation across the country, supported her close friends Kat Ball and Mark Everett at its Stevenson House in London when their daughter, Isla, required emergency treatment immediately after she was born.

The couple, also from Southend, were left worried during Kat's pregnancy when a scan revealed their unborn baby had a large cyst growing on her neck. The parents-to-be were told Isla might require urgent medical attention at birth and plans were made for the baby to be delivered at the Royal London Children's Hospital in London. However, a month before she was due to give birth, Kat began to suffer from serious health complications and Isla was delivered by emergency caesarean on 14 November at Southend University Hospital. Newborn Isla was immediately transferred to The Royal London Children's Hospital with the anxious parents joining their baby in London as soon as Kat was discharged. Vicky, who is a lecturer in anatomy and physiology at Southend College, says:

"Whilst Isla was in hospital in London, over an hour away from home, Kat and Mark were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. Southend is a good hour away by car and during such a stressful time this charity came to my friends' aid. Thankfully, after ten days, Isla was discharged home and is now doing really well. I am so grateful that in their time of need, The Sick Children's Trust was there for my friends, supporting them and keeping them close to their daughter's hospital bedside. This is why I am dedicating my charity efforts this year to the charity."

This month Vicky aims to complete the UK's most iconic 26.2 mile race in under five hours, beating her 2013 time by 15 minutes. Vicky will then challenge herself to take on Britain's longest, toughest, non-stop running race, The Grand Union Canal Race, starting in Birmingham and finishing in London. Competitors are required to complete the 145 mile distance within the time limit of 45 hours. Vicky adds:

"I really wanted to challenge myself this year. I have run a marathon before so by adding in this second 145 mile element to my fundraising effort just weeks after I hope I can encourage people to donate even more to The Sick Children's Trust. I have been telling my friends and family all about the amazing work the charity does. I had never heard of such a charity, but when I saw, first hand, just how much their support meant to Kat and Mark, I was committed to fundraise on their behalf."

Vicky, who took up running in 2014 to improve her overall health, and completed her first London Marathon under a year later, will join 18 other runners as part of #TeamSCT to raise vital funds for The Sick Children's Trust's 'Homes from Home' across the country. Although accommodation is provided to families free of charge, it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. Victoria McElhinney, Events Officer at The Sick Children's Trust, says:

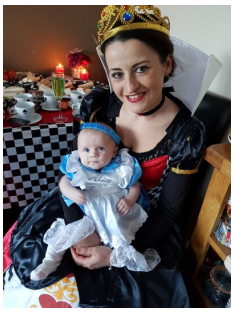
"Vicky's tough training routine over the last few months has impressed everybody. We can't believe she is taking on such a humongous challenge! To run the London Marathon is an amazing achievement in itself, but to add the 145 mile Grand Union Canal Race a month later is so inspirational.

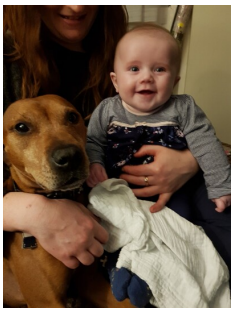
"With Vicky's support we can be there for more families in the future, providing them with the same high-quality free 'Home from Home' accommodation that Kat and Mark experienced when Isla was in hospital."

To help Vicky reach her £500 target, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/victoria-irvine6

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

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