Little Girl's Family Join In Chocola-Tea Fun To Thank Charity For ‘Home From Home’

Wednesday 5 April, 2017

The parents of a little girl who survived three major lung conditions at just five weeks old are backing The Sick Children’s Trust’s Big Chocolate Tea campaign.

Emily and Luke Smallbone, from Chessington, experienced every parent’s worst nightmare last year when their baby, Esmé, was rushed to The Royal London Hospital with breathing difficulties. Esmé fought for her life on the paediatric intensive care unit (PICU) for four days and during this time The Sick Children’s Trust supported Emily, Luke and their eldest daughter Ava with free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation, just minutes away from Esmé’s hospital bedside.

Almost two years later Esmé is doing really well and now her parents are taking part in the charity’s biggest annual fundraiser Big Chocolate Tea. Big Chocolate raises money to support families with seriously ill children in hospital with free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation. Emily and Luke, who were supported at The Sick Children’s Trust’s Stevenson House, are holding Big Chocolate Tea events at their places of work during campaign week (Friday 21 April – Monday 1 May) to raise money and awareness for The Sick Children’s Trust. **Mum Emily says:**

“It was the worst time of our lives when Esmé was fighting for her life, but The Sick Children’s Trust was there for us which meant our family wasn’t torn apart as we could all be together in a ‘Home from Home’.

“Stevenson House was a huge relief and meant we were just minutes from Esmé’s hospital bedside when she needed us the most. She had all of us there, including her sister Ava, and we believe this had a significant impact on our baby’s speedy recovery.

“And because of that, we are joining in the charity’s Big Chocolate Tea by holding two events at both our places of work. Not only do we want to say thank you to The Sick Children’s Trust for its support, we want to raise vital funds to keep Stevenson House and the nine other ‘Homes from Home’ running so it can support more families going through the most unimaginable times.”

It costs The Sick Children’s Trust £30 to support a family in one of its ten ‘Homes from Home’ for one night. Alongside a private bedroom, the ‘Homes from Home’ include access to communal living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, playrooms and laundry facilities. Last year, Big Chocolate Tea raised £60,000 which gave 2,000 families free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation, keeping them together just minutes from their seriously ill child’s bedside. The Sick Children’s Trust hopes this year’s campaign will be an even greater success. **Stevenson House Manager, Alan Booth, says:**

“It’s always lovely to hear from families who we’ve supported at Stevenson House. And knowing that they’re trying to raise money to help other families whose children are seriously ill in hospital is really touching.

“It’s an incredibly difficult time when a child is in hospital and The Sick Children’s Trust helps ease some of the worries families have by keeping them together by their child’s side in free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation. It costs the charity £30 per night to support a family, so we’re asking as many people as possible to get involved with Big Chocolate Tea so that we can give more families ‘Home from Home’ accommodation minutes from their child’s hospital bedside.”

Big Chocolate Tea runs from Friday 21 April to Monday 1 May, however supporters can choose to take part in Big Chocolate Tea at any point during the year and will receive a free fundraising pack full of goodies to hold the perfect event. For more information and to request your pack, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea.

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