Local butcher to run London Marathon to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust

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A grateful father whose two year old son required emergency lifesaving treatment when he was born will be running the Virgin Money London Marathon to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust – a charity which runs free 'Home from Home' accommodation for families with critically ill children in hospital.

Butcher Mark Dean, 29, from Walton on the Naze, will be taking on his first marathon this April in a bid to raise £3,000 for The Sick Children's Trust to thank the charity for giving him and wife Poppy free 'Home from Home' accommodation when their son, David, required lifesaving treatment miles away from home.

At just a few hours old, David was rushed to The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, following a series of seizures after a difficult birth. With Mum, Poppy, requiring further hospital treatment, she and Mark had to wait for her to be discharged before they could join their new-born son. While they waited, the couple were told about The Sick Children's Trust, which runs two 'Homes from Home' in Cambridge. **Mark, who hopes to complete the marathon in five hours, says:**

"We had only been with David for a few hours before he was taken away from us and rushed to The Rosie Hospital, miles away from home. We were devastated. Poppy was kept in Colchester General Hospital and needed me to be there with her. And although we were in constant contact with the doctors in Cambridge and knew David was OK, the next morning Poppy was so anxious she discharged herself and we raced to Cambridge. We had already heard about The Sick Children's Trust, but didn't find out that we had been given a room by the charity at Chestnut House until we arrived at the hospital.

"Seeing his tiny body in an incubator on the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) was heart-breaking. He was so small and so perfect. The scariest thing was that nobody knew what was wrong with him. Our whole world had been turned upside down, but thanks to The Sick Children's Trust we were given our own room, just a floor away from NICU. This meant we could see David at any time we wanted, day or night, without having to make the four hour round trip.

"Without this amazing charity, the already overwhelming circumstances would have been a lot worse, so this is why I wanted to challenge myself to raise as much money as possible so they can continue helping other families to be close to their child, as they did with Poppy and I."

Although doctors were unable to say why David had suffered from the seizures, he thankfully stabilised. After five days on NICU he was strong enough to be transferred back to Colchester General Hospital, close to the family's home. At a week old his proud parents took him home for the first time and with no further complications, and David recently celebrated his second birthday. **Mark continues:**

"We feel very lucky to have been supported in free 'Home from Home' accommodation and understand that many other families do not have that opportunity. That's why I would love to raise as much money as I can for The Sick Children's Trust, a charity that recognises a family needs to be just minutes away from their seriously ill child. At a time when your whole world has been turned upside down they offer hope."

Mark is joining #TeamSCT this year to and hopes to raise £3,000 to help the charity continue supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital with free 'Home from Home' accommodation. **He adds:**

"I work in a very busy butcher's shop, Wright's of Frinton, in the heart of Frinton-on-Sea. We are the only butcher's in the town and are well known. Last July, my boss and colleagues all got on board to fundraise after they learnt what the charity does for families with sick children in hospital and I am confident I will be able to reach this target with the support of friends and family. Last night I raised £2,275 alone at a quiz night I organised at The Manor in Great Holland! I am very confident I will reach my fundraising target of £3,000 for The Sick Children's Trust, although no amount of money could ever show our gratitude."

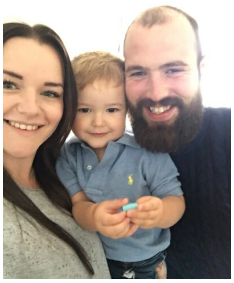
The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations and it costs £30 to support a family for one night. **Chestnut House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

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“We’re delighted to welcome Mark on to #TeamSCT and know he is going to achieve his goal!

“When David was on NICU, it was very hard for Mark and Poppy, but I’m so pleased we were able to support them at Chestnut House. It means so much to us when families stay in touch and raise money for the charity. Their support is vital in helping us to be there for more families with seriously ill children in hospital.

“We’re so pleased to hear that David has made a fantastic recovery and had a lovely second birthday. And we’re wishing Mark the best of luck with the London Marathon!”

To help Mark reach his £3,000 target, please visit:

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

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