Mum Braves Freezing Sea to Raise Cash for Charity

Tuesday 16 February, 2016

A Mum whose son died for forty minutes after a cardiac arrest is getting ready to battle the freezing cold sea to raise money for the charity that kept her by her son's hospital bedside over 60 miles away from home.

Elizabeth Bruin, 29 from Berwick-Upon-Tweed, will be swimming in the North Sea on 20 February to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. Four years ago, the charity gave Elizabeth and husband Paul, 35, free 'Home from Home' accommodation so they could be with their seven-year-old son, Lewis, when he was rushed to Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary.

Lewis, now 11, was a very healthy and active boy before he had a sudden cardiac arrest. He had a complex heart defect which caused his heart to beat abnormally fast resulting in a heart attack at his local hospital, where he was then resuscitated for forty minutes. Once stabilised, Lewis was rushed to Newcastle's specialist children's hospital. Elizabeth and Paul were given a 'Home from Home' for four days at The Sick Children's Trust's Crawford House before their son was transferred to Freeman Hospital, Newcastle, for keyhole surgery. **Elizabeth, who volunteers for the British Heart Foundation, says:**

“I couldn't get my head around what was happening. Lewis had been absolutely fine - we thought he just had a sickness bug. When I got the call from my Mum and Paul to say an ambulance was on its way, I couldn't believe it.

“During this hell, we were fortunate enough to stay at Crawford House. When we went to Freeman Hospital there was no accommodation available for us, as the new 'Home from Home' Scott House hadn't been completed, which made us appreciate just how much The Sick Children's Trust helped. It was the worst time of our lives - we had no idea whether he would pull through or not - so being just a minutes' walk away from his bedside and have a direct telephone to the ward was so valuable.

“The Sick Children's Trust provided us with a 'Home from Home' for four days - it was crucial that we could stay together as a family and be there for one another. Because of their wonderful support we'd like to thank them by raising some funds to help other families with sick children.

Lewis, who attends Scouts every week, and is the 'happiest he's ever been', will be supporting his Mum on the day. **Crawford House Manager, Gail Stonley, says:**

“After all these years it's wonderful to hear this news from Elizabeth and we're so pleased that Lewis is doing extremely well. Elizabeth's event will do wonders to support families whose children are seriously ill at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, but it will also help raise local awareness of the charity in Berwick-Upon-Tweed. It's vital that families know that this service is available to them, as a 'Home from Home' helps make things just that little bit easier.”

To find out more about The Sick Children's Trust, please visit www.sickchildrenstrust.org

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