Mum Forms ‘Ava’s Army’ To Thank Charity For Support When Daughter Was Seriously Ill In Hospital

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A local mum who nearly lost her baby daughter to a life-threatening heart condition last year is getting ready to take on London’s 2017 Gauntlet Games to raise money for The Sick Children’s Trust.

Krystina Lake-Jayson, 29, along with 20 friends and family members, will be taking on a 5k obstacle course next month to say thanks to The Sick Children’s Trust, which supported Krystina with free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation when her daughter, Ava, was fighting for her life.

When she was just 16 months old, Ava became critically ill with cardiomyopathy, a serious heart condition where the heart struggles to pump blood around the body. Within weeks, Ava was rushed from the Lister Hospital in Stevenage to Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge where she was put into an induced coma and kept alive by a ventilator. Krystina and Luke watched on in desperation as the doctors battled to save their baby’s life.

Within 24 hours of their daughter being admitted to the specialist hospital, Krystina and Luke were given a set of keys to Acorn House, free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation provided by The Sick Children’s Trust. This meant the couple could be just minutes from their daughter’s hospital bedside and could have Ava’s twin brother Austin with them. **Mum Krystina says:**

“This amazing charity gave us a place to stay when we were out of our minds with fear and worry that we were going to lose our beautiful baby daughter. If it hadn’t been for Acorn House I don’t know how we would’ve coped.

“It hadn’t even entered my mind where we would be sleeping or staying whilst Ava was in intensive care. When we entered Acorn House exhausted and sick with fear, I immediately burst into tears. I was astounded at how amazing and carefully thought out it was. It was a safe haven, warm, clean and homely.

“Acorn House kept us so close to our baby and it was also a safe environment for her twin brother, Austin, who could come to visit. His world had been turned upside down just as much as ours had, so with us being able to stay together as a family at Acorn House was very important. I was able to play with Austin, watch TV with him and give him his dinner while still being there for my daughter.”

After six days at Addenbrooke’s Hospital, Ava took a turn for the worse and was rushed to The Royal Brompton Hospital in London for further treatment. **Krystina adds:**

“Ava’s condition was deteriorating fast and the decision was made for an emergency transfer to London. We were terrified. Not only were we frightened of losing our daughter but all the additional stresses of where we would stay, and being separated from Austin came back.

“We were in London for two months and there was no accommodation like Acorn House there. We had to pay for accommodation for the whole time which was very expensive and it made us realise just how lucky we’d been to be given that set of keys to The Sick Children’s Trust’s Acorn House.

“I don’t know how Ava managed to hold on, but she did and even with everything she had been through, she eventually fought her way out of hospital and back home. Now that she is getting stronger, we want to say thank you to The Sick Children’s Trust by raising money. The ‘Homes from Home’ are so important, and we want to make sure that if there’s a family going through something similar, The Sick Children’s Trust can be there for them.”

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. It costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night in a ‘Home from Home’. **Elisa Capello-Dowd, Community Fundraising Manager at The Sick Children’s Trust, says:**

“We’re thrilled to hear that Ava is doing so well and smiling again. The money that ‘Ava’s Army’ raise will make a huge difference in helping families who have a seriously ill child in hospital and need a ‘Home from Home’. It costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night, so we rely on our supporters and their generous donations to keep the houses running. We wish everyone the best of luck

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and can’t wait to hear how The Gauntlet Games go!”

To read more about Ava’s story, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Avas-army

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