Mum Joins in Halloween Fun to Raise Money for Charity

Friday 21 October, 2016

The Mum of a baby who was born at just 33 weeks and spent the first six weeks of her life fighting in hospital is fundraising for The Sick Children's Trust as thanks for giving her 'Home from Home' accommodation.

Amanda Lawton, 37, from Ryhope, Sunderland, is taking part in Dalton Park's 'Trick or Treat Trail' on Friday 28 October to help raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. The Sick Children's Trust is a charity that supports families with free 'Home from Home' accommodation when a child is seriously ill in hospital and last year supported Amanda's family.

Mum Amanda gave birth to her daughter Rebecca at just 33 weeks at Sunderland Royal Hospital and even though she weighed just over 3lbs, it wasn't long before she was allowed home. However after six days of being at home, Rebecca stopped breathing and was rushed to hospital where she was ventilated. But Amanda and Rebecca's Dad, William, were told that their daughter needed further treatment and was sent to Newcastle upon Tyne's Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) - 40 minutes away from home. For three weeks Rebecca fought for life, but she was not alone as her parents, along with siblings Matthew, Emily and William, were just minutes away thanks to The Sick Children's Trust. The Sick Children's Trust gave the family a private room at its 'Home from Home' Crawford House, located at the RVI. This meant that Amanda was just a few minutes' walk away from Rebecca's side and her family had access to a living room, dining room, kitchen, laundry facilities and a playroom for Rebecca's siblings. **Mum, Amanda, says:**

"The Sick Children's Trust helped our family in a way we don't think we could ever repay them. Without the charity, I wouldn't have been able to spend every minute of every day with my baby girl while she fought for her life. I had somewhere to lay my head – maybe not even to sleep – but to take time and know that I was just minutes away from my daughter and could be there in no time at all in case the worst happened. This took a large amount of worry and stress away during an unbelievable situation.

"For three weeks it really was touch and go. We thought we may lose our baby and Crawford House helped us when we were frankly going through hell. During that time, we were in a beautiful house, with lovely staff - even just a 'good morning' from the staff as you walked out to face another uncertain day helped."

Following her treatment at the RVI, Rebecca was transferred back to Sunderland Royal Infirmary and spent another three weeks on the ward until she grew strong enough to go home. **Amanda continues:**

"We're so fortunate that Rebecca did pull through - she is almost one year old and doing really well. It hasn't been an easy ride and she is still on oxygen, but from where this all started she has done amazingly well. And now, we want to help raise money for other families who may find themselves in such a heart-breaking situation. So on Friday 28 October, our whole family are going to Dalton Park to do the Trick or Treat Trail. The Sick Children's Trust is a cause which is very close to all of our family and we know they need all the fundraising they can get to help parents and families like ours."

Families taking part in Dalton Park's Trick or Treat Trail next Friday are being encouraged to dress up in their spookiest fancy dress to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. **Dalton Park Marketing Manager, Louise Thompson, says:**

"We've had an overwhelming amount of support from all over the North East for our Trick and Treat Trail – so much so that registration is full. The good news is that we will be looking into more sponsored walks next year.

"Many families across the North East will benefit from the Trick or Treat Trail, as we are encouraging families who are taking part to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust. The Sick Children's Trust is an incredible charity that supports around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital each year and 1,200 of those families are from the North East. Although the 'Home from Home' accommodation is free for families, it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. We're so grateful for everyone's support so far and we know that these families who are taking part in our Trick or Treat Trail will make it a spook-tacular event!"

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

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