# Nine year old’s charity car wash gives family with child in hospital a place to stay

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A Brightlingsea girl has made it her mission to help families with seriously ill children in hospital by spending her afternoons washing her neighbours’ cars.

Nine year old Lilly Stead has raised £48 for The Sick Children’s Trust to thank the charity for giving her parents a place to stay when her brother Teddy was rushed to Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge, 80 miles away from home, in 2017.

Teddy, now six, spent two weeks in hospital after suddenly struggling to breathe. His parents Melissa and Andy Stead rushed him to Colchester Hospital before he was referred to Cambridge. He spent a week in an induced coma in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit and was diagnosed with heart failure, pneumonia and enterovirus. During this time, Melissa and Andy were supported by The Sick Children’s Trust’s ‘Home from Home’ Acorn House. Lily was able to also stay just a stone’s throw away at Acorn House and see Teddy when he was moved to a ward.

**Speaking about her fundraising, Lilly said:** “I wanted to fundraise for The Sick Children’s Trust because when my brother was really ill they gave us a house to stay in because it was too far away. We would’ve had to go backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards.

“I enjoyed the car washing, it was fun and I like looking at the shiny cars at the end. It makes me feel happy that I can help some other little child. Thank you to everyone for donated.”

Since leaving hospital, Teddy has regular heart scans but has made a full recovery. At the start of September, both Teddy and his sister excitedly returned to school. **Mum Melissa added:**

“Lilly has always wanted to raise money for charity and we discussed what she could do. She decided on car washing and helping the charity that supported us. She was six when Teddy was in hospital and remembers him not being at home and the visits to Acorn House. Initially she set her target at £20 so she is chuffed to have doubled that!

“At the time it didn’t even cross my mind about staying somewhere. Without The Sick Children’s Trust, we would’ve slept in a chair by his bed, I think that is all we could’ve done. We wouldn’t have left him, so having Acorn House really made the situation easier as we had somewhere to sleep which was close by and a place we could eat a meal and shower. It was fantastic.”

No parent with a seriously ill child in hospital should have to worry about how they can be by their bedside. The Sick Children’s Trust makes sure families can be together by giving them a free place to stay in one of its ten ‘Homes from Home’. **Charlotte Coldrey, Community Fundraising Officer at The Sick Children’s Trust said:**

“Everyone at the charity is so impressed with Lilly’s amazing fundraising efforts and dedication. She is a super supporter and has worked so hard to raise every single penny!

“As a charity we rely entirely on voluntary donations to continue to be there for families, so that they can be together with their seriously ill child in hospital. People like Lilly make this possible and we’d like to say a huge heartfelt thanks to her for choosing to support us.”

To find out how you can support The Sick Children’s Trust and give a family with a seriously ill child in hospital a place to stay, visit sickchildrenstrust.org

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