Parents back charity's Pyjama Party as thanks for 'Home from Home'

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The parents of a little boy who needed lifesaving treatment at just a few hours old are asking the nation to support The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party after the charity gave them free 'Home from Home' accommodation.

First time parents, Dave Plane and Lesa Bennett, were supported by The Sick Children's Trust when their son, Broderick, was born in May 2015. During a traumatic birth, Broderick inhaled meconium (his first bowel movement) which caused him to stop breathing. Fortunately, the doctors managed to stabilise and intubate him and for the next 30 days, Broderick fought for his life.

During this time, Dave and Lesa, stayed at The Sick Children's Trust's 'Home from Home' Stevenson House. Stevenson House is located just minutes from The Royal London Hospital, which meant the couple could be there to support their new-born baby every day and every night. **Dave, who earlier this year raised over £2,300 for the charity after completing the Hackney Half Marathon, says:**

"When Brody turned blue and stopped breathing we thought he had died. The first night he was kept in was horrendous, our baby had been taking away from us and Lesa and I had also been separated. We needed to be together and support each other.

"Thankfully, we heard about The Sick Children's Trust through another family whose son was also on intensive care. The family explained that the charity ran a 'Home from Home' called Stevenson House which was just a few minutes' walk away. We felt like we didn't deserve to stay there as we live 45 minutes away in Essex, far closer than many of the families, but they encouraged us to speak to the House Manager, so we did. The House Manager, Alan, put these thoughts to bed. He reassured us that it didn't matter whether we lived 45 minutes away or four hours away, The Sick Children's Trust is there to support families with seriously ill children.

"As the days turned into weeks, he became stronger. From being two weeks old his sedation was reduced and he gradually started coming round…So by the time he was 17 days old we had our first cuddle. It finally felt like we were a real Mum and Dad, rather than just looking at our son through a glass box, we could now take him out of his cot, hold him, bathe him and Lesa could finally breastfeed him."

Broderick is back at home now and doing really. Dave and Lesa are calling on the nation to help raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust by getting involved with its annual Pyjama Party. Pyjama Party is a fun filled day where children are sponsored to come to nursery or playgroup dressed in their favourite pyjamas and take part in various activities. **Dave continues:**

"Stevenson House meant we could be with Brody at any time we wanted to. We could read him bedtime stories, visit him at all hours and take every step with him. If it wasn't for Stevenson House, we would've felt like we'd abandoned Brody by travelling back home every day. It was invaluable. Although we couldn't do as much as a normal Mum and Dad could, we were able to do some of the things and give our son all the attention and positive energy he needed. So if you can help the charity keep families together when their child is seriously ill, please do join in with The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital, three of which are located in London. **Stevenson House Manager, Alan Booth, says:**

"Dave and Lesa have been incredible supporters of The Sick Children's Trust since they have left Stevenson House. The money they have raised for us has been brilliant as it costs the charity around £30 to support a family for one night in one of our 'Homes from Homes'.

"The Sick Children's Trust completely relies on voluntary donations to keep the houses running, so if you can join in with the Pyjama Party this October we would be very grateful for your support."

The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party takes place from Monday 17 October to Friday 21 October. For more information on The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party, please visit: http://bit.ly/2bpm0ls or email fundraising@sickchildrentrust.org.

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