Parents Of Baby Born Weighing Same As Bag Of Sugar Back Charity's Big Chocolate Tea Campaign

Friday 21 April, 2017

The parents of a baby born 14 weeks prematurely, weighing the same as a bag of sugar, are asking the community to get behind The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea campaign.

Albie Mellor, who turns one year old next month, was born seriously ill at their local Colchester Hospital weighing just over 2lb. At just five hours old the tiny baby was transferred 60 miles away from home to The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, for lifesaving treatment. Albie remained in hospital for nine weeks undergoing numerous procedures to help him survive. During this time his parents Tyler, 21, and Michala, 35, were just minutes away as they were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust.

Tyler and Michala were supported at Chestnut House, located just below the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) where Albie fought for his life. Although the accommodation is free to families, it costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 to support a family for a night in one of its ten 'Homes from Home' and it relies entirely on voluntary donations to meet this cost.

Big Chocolate Tea is the charity's biggest annual fundraising campaign and raises money to support families when their child is seriously ill in hospital. Albie's parents are hoping others will join them in supporting Big Chocolate Tea. **Dad Tyler, a soldier from Colchester, says:**

"Because Albie was so ill, it wasn't possible for us to sleep by his bedside, so we really don't know what we would have done. We were so far away from home and couldn't have funded a place to stay in Cambridge for over two months. It wouldn't have been manageable.

"Every morning we woke up not knowing what the day ahead would bring. Having the support of The Sick Children's Trust helped us enormously with coping with this uncertainty. We were staying just minutes from Albie's side in the charity's 'Home from Home' Chestnut House. Without this place, we would not have coped physically, emotionally or financially.

"We want to do whatever we can to raise awareness of The Sick Children's Trust, and to help the charity support more families like ours. If you can join in Big Chocolate Tea, and raise at least £30 you will be giving a family with a seriously ill child in hospital a 'Home from Home' when they need it the most."

Last year, Big Chocolate Tea raised £60,000 which gave 2,000 families free 'Home from Home' accommodation, keeping them together when it matters most. The Sick Children's Trust hopes this year's campaign will be an even greater success. **Chestnut House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal, says:**

"It's lovely that Tyler and Michala are asking others to support The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea campaign.

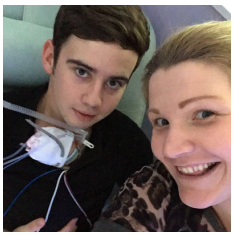
"When a baby is seriously ill, it's an incredibly difficult time and The Sick Children's Trust helps ease some of the worries families have by keeping them together by their baby's side in free 'Home from Home' accommodation.

"Big Chocolate Tea is such a great campaigns as it the perfect way for supporters to get together with friends, family and colleagues over a nice cuppa and chocolate treat!"

Supporters can choose to take part in Big Chocolate Tea at any point during the year and will receive a free fundraising pack full of goodies to hold the perfect event. For more information and to request your pack, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea.

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