Parents Of Baby Predicted Not To Survive 48hrs Back Charity's Big Chocolate Tea Campaign

Wednesday 29 March, 2017

The parents of a baby boy who was not expected to survive more than 48 hours are calling on their local community to support The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea fundraiser this April.

Natasha and Ashley Elley, from Basildon, were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation by The Sick Children's Trust when their son, Toby, was born 15 weeks early and needed lifesaving treatment at The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge. When Toby was just two days old, his parents were told to consider turning off their son's life-support machine. But thankfully, Toby started to show signs of recovery and, after a gruelling 105 days in hospital, he was finally allowed home.

During his time in The Rosie Hospital, Natasha and Ashley were just a few minutes' walk from their son's bedside thanks to free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. The couple are now calling on others to support the charity's biggest annual fundraising campaign and get involved with Big Chocolate Tea from Friday 21 April to Monday 1 May. Big Chocolate Tea raises money to support families with free 'Home from Home' accommodation when their child is seriously ill in hospital. **Natasha, who stayed at Chestnut House, says:**

"Basildon is miles away from The Rosie Hospital, so I don't know what we would've done without Chestnut House. There was nowhere else we wanted to be but by our son's side. It was a huge worry, but thankfully Chestnut House took care of that worry for us by giving us free 'Home from Home accommodation just minutes from Toby's hospital bedside.

"Since our stay in Chestnut House, Toby has been back in hospital for a further operation due to some complications. But he's doing really well and is back to his normal smiley self. And every day Ashley and I are amazed by how far he's come.

"We want to raise awareness of this amazing charity because they supported us when we needed it the most. And by getting involved in Big Chocolate Tea and raising £30, we know that we can help another family who is going through every parent's worst nightmare by giving them a 'Home from Home' so they can be there for their seriously ill child."

It costs £30 to support a family for one night with a private room in one of the charity's ten 'Homes from Home', which include access to communal kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms and dining rooms alongside a direct telephone line from each bedroom to the hospital ward. Chestnut House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal, says:

"We're delighted that Natasha and Ashley are helping to spread the word about Big Chocolate Tea, we really appreciate it when families stay in touch and support us in helping others whose lives have been thrown into turmoil.

"Big Chocolate Tea is all about getting together with friends, family and colleagues over tea and chocolate. At the same time, it's a chance to make a difference to families with seriously ill children. If you can raise £30 by holding a Big Chocolate Tea event, your money will go towards supporting a family, keeping them together when it matters most."

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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