Parents of baby who needed lifesaving surgery at birth to raise money for charity

Thursday 14 December, 2017

The parents of a baby boy, Albie, who underwent lifesaving surgery at only four hours old, are taking on the gruelling Tough Mudder Mud Run to fundraise for The Sick Children's Trust, who supported them with free 'Home from Home' accommodation whilst their son recovered in hospital.

Ashton Daley, 28, and her partner, Tom Greenwood, 25, from Huddersfield, were left terrified when they found out there was something wrong with their baby at a ten week scan. Doctors at Huddersfield Hospital told the worried parents that Albie had developed a condition known as gastroschisis, which meant his bowels were growing outside of his body. They were sent to Leeds General Infirmary (LGI) for further tests and Albie was closely monitored over the months that followed. **Mum, Ashton, who works as an optical advisor, says:**

"We had never heard of such a condition and didn't know what to expect, but the doctors reassured us there were no other complications and provided us with lots of information.

"It was so worrying knowing his condition was getting worse, but until he was born there was nothing anybody could do about it. I was so scared to do much whilst I was pregnant and time seemed to pass very slowly. My eight year old son, Jacob, also knew there was something wrong and that his mummy wasn't being herself, which made him anxious – it was a bad time for us all.

"Albie was induced three weeks early on Friday 13th October 2017 in a room full of doctors and nurses. Although, Friday 13th in an unlucky day for some, for Tom and I, it was the amazing day we got to meet our son for the first time. Even though we had been expecting it, it was a massive shock to both of us to see the extent of the condition and how much of his bowels were protruding outside his tiny body. The doctors quickly whisked Albie away, leaving Tom comforting me in my hospital bed."

Albie underwent the corrective surgery to move his bowels back into his abdomen at just four hours old. Fortunately, the operation was a huge success and Albie was stabilised and began to recover on the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at LGI. **Mum, Ashton, continues:**

"We had heard about Eckersley House run by The Sick Children's Trust during one of my visits to LGI when I was pregnant, but a room didn't become available for us for a few days. During this time I stayed on a ward at the hospital, which wasn't very comfortable, so it was a huge relief for us when we could move into a 'Home from Home'. That is exactly what Eckersley House became for us – a place that felt like home. We stayed there for three weeks until Albie was discharged and I can't describe how amazing it was to have somewhere to stay so close to his bedside. There was a direct phone line from his ward into our room, which meant in the middle of the night when I was worried I could call through and be reassured in moments."

Eckersley House is run by The Sick Children's Trust. The charity runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, supporting families, like Albie's with free accommodation whilst their child is being treated in hospital. **Ashton continues:**

"We also met other parents at Eckersley House, who had babies being treated in LGI, which was a real comfort and support, plus having a room there meant Jacob could spend his weekends with us so we could be a complete family. He loved playing in the playroom and made friends with other children staying in the house."

Fortunately, Albie, made a miraculous recovery and was discharged after just four weeks. Since then, he has grown from strength to strength and was given the all clear at his most recent hospital visit. Now his parents are keen to give back to the charity that supported them during their worrying ordeal and along with Tom's brothers, Matthew, Chris and Will, and Ashton's friend, Rosie Campbell, they are fundraising for The Sick Children's Trust. **Dad, Tom, who is Assistant Project Manager at Hargreaves Ductwork Ltd., says:**

"Being able to give back to the charity that supported Ashton and I is very important to us. My brothers

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and I are all fitness fanatics, so this seems like a good challenge to take on, especially as Ashton and her friend are also going to join in, which is very impressive!

“We are hoping to raise at least £5,000 in the months leading up to the race, which will take place next June in Skipton and hopefully when people read about the amazing work of The Sick Children’s Trust they will be inspired to donate. We can’t thank the charity enough for what they did for us after Albie was born.”

The family are also supporting The Sick Children’s Trust’s first ever Christmas campaign, which aims to raise £13,140, enough to run its ten ‘Homes from Home’ over the festive period. The charity supports around 4,000 families in its ten ‘Homes from Home’ every year – keeping families close to their seriously ill child’s bedside. **Jane McHale, Eckersley House Manager, says:**

“We are so grateful to Albie’s mum and dad for their commitment to The Sick Children’s Trust and decision to fundraise for us. We were thrilled to hear Albie was given the all clear at his latest check-up.

“It costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night in one of our ‘Homes from Home’ and we rely entirely on voluntary donations to do this, so Ashton and Tom’s fundraising will contribute to supporting lots of other families when they need a ‘Home from Home’.”

To keep a family together this Christmas, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/sickchildrenstrust/alliwantforxmas.

To watch the Christmas appeal film, visit: https://youtu.be/qpgKkZuPWmc.

To support Ashton and Tom Greenwood, family and friends on their fundraising mission, please visit the Just Giving page:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/thomas-greenwood

For further information about The Sick Children’s Trust, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/

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