Parents of little boy born with life-threatening condition raise over £14,000 to thank charities close to their hearts

Tuesday 19 June, 2018

A local family has raised over £14,000 to thank The Sick Children's Trust and Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (ACT) for their support whilst their newborn son received lifesaving treatment in a specialist hospital miles away from home.

Sinead Mcternan and Patrick Malone, from Bedford, recently organised a fundraising event to raise vital funds for The Sick Children's Trust, a charity that provides free 'Home from Home' accommodation to families with seriously ill children in, and ACT.

When their son, Shay, was born he was diagnosed with a congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH). Shay's diaphragm had failed to form correctly and was causing his intestines to move up into his chest cavity, putting intense pressure on his left lung. As a result, when Shay was born he was unable to breathe on his own and it took six hours for doctors to stabilise him. Once stabilised, he was transferred to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge for lifesaving treatment. Fortunately, during this traumatic time, Shay's parents were given a room at Chestnut House, free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust, which meant they were never more than a few minutes from their precious son's hospital bedside. **Mum Sinead, a hairdressing teacher at Bedford College, says:**

"I gave birth to Shay via an emergency caesarean following a difficult labour. Up until this point, we'd had a textbook pregnancy with no complications so it was only when more and more doctors started to gather round our son that Patrick and I really started to panic. When Shay was just a few hours old he was rushed to The Rosie Hospital and it was heartbreaking. I had just undergone major surgery and wasn't well enough to go with him, so Patrick went while I stayed in Bedford. I was distraught.

"The following day I was transferred to a ward in Addenbrooke's Hospital where I remained for a week until I was discharged and able to be with my family. It felt like the longest week of my life.

Although, I can only begin to imagine the amount of stress Patrick was in at the time, being with our critically ill baby while also worrying about me. But when he told me that he'd been given a room at The Sick Children's Trust's Chestnut House, minutes away from Shay I was relieved. I didn't quite believe such a thing could even exist until I joined him there – it was absolutely amazing.

"The House Manager, Abi, and her team were fantastic. I don't know how we would've survived without their support – especially when Patrick was by himself and trying to cope with everything on his own. It really felt like we had become part of a family who we knew would be there for us if ever we needed anyone to talk to, a shoulder to cry on, or to simply share a pot of tea with. We will be forever grateful."

Since his lifesaving treatment, Shay is coming on leaps and bounds and is getting stronger every day. The little baby boy, who is almost five months old, inspired his parents to organise the fundraising event at The Grafton Hotel, Bedford. **Sinead, who along with her partner raised over £14,000 for the two charities, continues:**

"I can't quite believe how much money we've raised. We aimed to reach £8,000 so this total has come as lovely surprise! The place was packed with friends and family who'd come along to show their support. We had some very generous prize donations for the auction and raffle including signed football shirts, theatre tickets and bundles of amazing toys. From the bottom of our hearts we want to say thank you to everyone who helped make the night a success."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations and it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. **Chestnut House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal, says:**

"We'd like to say a massive thank you to the Sinead and Patrick for choosing to raise awareness and vital funds for The Sick Children's Trust. I am so pleased we were able to support them. It's wonderful to hear that Shay has made such a great recovery.

"As a charity we rely entirely on voluntary donations so we can continue to run our ten 'Homes from

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Home' across the country, supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. The money they've raised will help support even more families, who need a 'Home from Home' when their child is seriously ill in hospital."

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

For more information, visit the family's Just Giving site https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sinead-mcternan

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