Parents on fundraising mission to thank The Sick Children's Trust

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Media:















The parents of a little girl born unable to swallow continue to tirelessly fundraise for The Sick Children's Trust, a charity that provided them with free accommodation whilst their new-born daughter received lifesaving treatment in hospital.

Jenny Hill, 28, and her husband Simon, 31, from Bedworth are taking on separate inspirational fundraising challenges in the hope of raising further vital funds for the charity close to their hearts. Jenny, a maths and science tutor, has committed to completing 30 running challenges and winning 30 medals before she turns 30 in June 2019, whilst Simon is getting ready to take on the 2018 Outlaw Triathlon.

In 2016, the couple were devastated when their daughter, Emilia, was born with a rare congenital condition of the oesophagus, tracheooesophageal fistula (TOF) – where the bottom end of the oesophagus is joined to the windpipe. Within a few hours of being born with this life-threatening condition, Emilia was rushed by ambulance to The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge, over an hour and a half away from home. **Mum, Jenny, who has so far completed 12 of her 30 running challenges, says:**

"It was really scary when I went into labour early. I hadn't experienced any complications during my pregnancy so when Emilia arrived and needed to be transferred from George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton to The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge for lifesaving surgery we were shocked. All too soon we found ourselves miles from home with no idea whether our baby was going to survive.

"We hadn't had time to think about where we might stay or how long we would be away from home. Fortunately The Sick Children's Trust came to our rescue and gave us a room, totally free of charge, at Chestnut House. Nobody knew at that point that Emilia would be at The Rosie Hospital for 45 days."

During Emilia's first treatment in Cambridge, The Sick Children's Trust gave Simon and Jennifer free 'Home from Home' accommodation at Chestnut House, which is located just below the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), minutes from their daughter's intensive care cot. Chestnut House is one of ten 'Homes from Home' run by the charity across the country, which provides families with a private room, bathroom and access to a fully stocked kitchen, as well as both emotional and practical support. **Simon, a De Montford University lecturer who, as part of his fundraising endeavours, runs a weekly 5km fun run around Miners Welfare Park to support various charities, continues:**

"Being given a room at Chestnut House when Emilia was in The Rosie Hospital meant that we were never more than a few minutes away from our baby. There was a direct phone line in our room straight to NICU where she was being treated and this helped with the anxiety of leaving her each night; the nurses could contact us 24 hours a day. It was so comforting to know that if anything changed during the night we could be with our daughter in just a couple of minutes. Chestnut House was absolutely amazing. When we were told that the room was also free of charge we couldn't quite believe it!"

At just two days old, Emilia underwent successful corrective surgery to her oesophagus. Since then, she has had to undergo regular stretching procedures at Addenbrooke's Hospital, also in Cambridge. Thankfully, the stretches, which are carried out under general anaesthetic, are now complete and Emilia has been discharged until her next review in January 2019. Throughout these procedures The Sick Children's Trust have also supported the Hill family at its Acorn House, the charity's other 'Home from Home' in Cambridge. **Jenny, who has so far this year completed the Birmingham 10K, Kenilworth 10k and Draycote Water 10k amongst others, continues:**

"Emilia is doing really well. Her eating is improving and she is trying different foods. She loves prawn crackers and BBQs in the garden and is a bouncy toddler who keeps us on our toes!

"We pop in to see Abi and the team at Chestnut House whenever we are in Cambridge. To us, they are true friends. Both Simon and I are really committed to fundraising for the charity that gave us so much during our time of need. I have entered into so many races I am confident I will be able to complete 30 by next June, including a few half marathons, and Simon is training so hard for his triathlon. We are really motivated by The Sick Children's Trust and the incredible support it offers to families, like ours, during a time of need."

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 £30 to support a family for one night. **Acorn and Chestnut House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal, says:**

"Jenny and Simon's ongoing commitment to raise money for the charity is inspirational and will help so many families who find themselves miles from home when their child needs lifesaving treatment in hospital.

"It is really exciting to hear about Jenny's upcoming running challenges and we are following her progress closely as she makes her way to winning 30 medals! Simon and Jenny were with us at Chestnut House for over six weeks so we got to know them really well.

"We'd like to say a huge thank you to Jenny and Simon for taking on these challenges for us, and we can't wait to hear how the triathlon and running goes!"

To sponsor Jenny, please visit https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/30before-30

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

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For more information: Please contact Alexandra Glatman on 020 7011 9368 or email alexandra@sickchildrenstrust.org

Notes to Editors:

About The Sick Children's Trust

The Sick Children's Trust is working to a future where every family with a seriously ill child in hospital will be able to stay together, just minutes from their child's bed during their treatment.

We believe keeping families together significantly improves the recovery of seriously ill children. We provide free, high-quality 'Home from Home' accommodation, as well as emotional and practical support, to families with sick children in hospital in the UK.

The Sick Children's Trust was founded in 1982 by two paediatric specialists Dr Jon Pritchard and Professor James Malpas. Today we have ten 'Homes from Home' at major hospitals around the country where families can stay free of charge, for as long as they need whilst their child is undergoing treatment.

We support around 4,000 families every year, and there is a growing demand for our 'Homes from Home' as children must increasingly travel long distances to get the specialist treatment they need. www.sickchildrenstrust.org



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