Schoolgirl's charity haircut in memory of baby Mollie Mae

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A local schoolgirl has bravely cut off over 11 inches of her hair to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust in memory of her godmother's daughter, Mollie Mae Meanwell, who tragically passed away in 2013.

Nine year old Lillia Pekacz, from Lincoln, plucked up the courage to say goodbye to her beloved locks in a sponsored haircut to raise both money and awareness for The Sick Children's Trust on behalf of her godparents, Vicky Reader and Mark Meanwell.

Vicky and Mark's daughter, Mollie Mae, was born in 2013 with complex health conditions and spent three months fighting for her life in Sheffield Children's Hospital before sadly losing her battle. During her short life her parents were supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. Treetop House is one of the charity's two 'Homes from Home' at the hospital, and meant Vicky and Mark were never more than a couple of minutes from their daughter's bedside. **Karis Hildred, Lillia's Mum says:**

"Although her life was painfully short, little Mollie Mae touched so many people's lives and was very much loved. As a family, we still come together every year on her birthday to remember such an incredibly special little girl.

"Vicky and Mark stayed at Treetop House whilst Mollie Mae was in hospital. Without the support of The Sick Children's Trust I don't know how they could have coped. A hotel would have been very expensive and home is over 80 miles away. As a friend, it was a great comfort knowing that they had Treetop House during this time. To know that they could go back to a warm and comfortable place after a difficult time on the ward with their baby each day took some of the practical stress away, especially when emotionally it was so hard to hold everything together.

"When Lillia told me that she wanted to do something to help raise awareness and money for The Sick Children's Trust I was so proud of her. Although Lillia was very young when the charity supported her godparents, she now understands just how much The Sick Children's Trust helped her godmother at that difficult time.

"Lillia had been growing her hair for two years and it was very long! When the time came for the charity chop I could tell she was very nervous as she loved her hair. We had a target in mind and wanted to raise £200. We thought a few people would donate the odd pound here or there so it was an incredible surprise when Lillia raised over £1,400. She was ecstatic and so thrilled! I couldn't believe it."

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**. Emily Corney, Regional Fundraising Officer at The Sick Children's Trust, says:**

"Mollie Mae's family have suffered a huge loss and our thoughts will always be with them. We're so grateful to Lillia for cutting off her beautiful long hair to raise money for the charity. The money she has raised will make a huge difference and support more families who need a 'Home from Home' when their child is seriously ill in hospital. I am sure her godmother is incredibly touched and proud of what Lillia has done in Mollie Mae's memory."

To read more about Lillia's fundraising mission, please visit her fundraising page at: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lilliascharitychop

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

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