Scunthorpe parents get baking for sick children's charity

Thursday 7 April, 2016

The parents of a little boy who has a rare form of epilepsy which causes him to have at least 30 seizures a day are asking people to support The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea fundraiser this April.

Donna and Dan McHugh, from Scunthorpe, were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation by The Sick Children's Trust so that they could be by their son's bedside when he was admitted to Sheffield Children's Hospital to help reduce his seizures.

Blake, 7, required specialist treatment at Sheffield Children's Hospital for Dravet Syndrome, a condition which occurs in just 1 in 40,000 children. Blake underwent Vagus Nerve Stimulation, where a plate was fitted under his chest to send electric energy to the brain to help reduce epileptic seizures. Donna and Dan were supported by both The Sick Children's Trust's Treetop and Magnolia Houses located at the hospital, so they could be with him throughout. **Donna says:**

“When Blake was in Intensive Care it was tough but it made a huge difference having the 'Homes from Home' Treetop and Magnolia. It meant we could be by Blake's side and he also knew that he wasn't alone, we were there for him. It will be scary for him, he doesn't really know what's going on or why he goes to hospital so often, but if we can be there and keep some normality it really does help.”

“We appreciate all the help the charity has given us and know that there will be many more families out there that will be in need of similar support. So we want to help spread the word by sharing Blake's story and encouraging people across the UK to join the charity's Big Chocolate Tea campaign to raise at least £30 to help provide a room for one night for another family with a sick child.”

Donna and Dan are joining The Sick Children's Trust's Big Chocolate Tea fundraising event from 22 April – 2 May and are asking others to get involved too. Big Chocolate Tea aims to raise thousands of pounds to help support more families across the UK with 'Home from Home' accommodation when their child is sick in hospital.

It costs on average £30 per night to provide a family with a room in one of the charity's 'Homes from Home' which includes access to communal kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms and dining rooms alongside a direct telephone line from each bedroom to the hospital ward. Treetop House Manager, Ann Wyatt, says:

“When a child is taken to hospital to receive critical treatment, life for the whole family is thrown into turmoil. Treetop and Magnolia Houses mean families can stay together in free 'Home from Home' accommodation, just minutes from their sick child's bedside - easing some of the worries at an incredibly difficult time.

“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.”

If you'd like to find out more about how you can get involved, please visit: http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/bigchoctea/

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