Sister thanks Sick Children's Trust for being there when brother was seriously ill

Thursday 19 May, 2016

The sister of a teenage boy who – at just 12-years-old – had a stroke which caused him to become 'locked in', is fundraising for The Sick Children's Trust to thank the charity for its support.

Jodie Solaiman, 21 from Worksop, will be running the Leeds' 5k Colour Me Rad on Saturday 21 May to raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust. The charity supported Jodie and her family at its free 'Home from Home' accommodation, Treetop House, when her brother needed life-saving treatment at Sheffield Children's Hospital.

For six months, Rafi was in Sheffield Children's Hospital after being transferred from his local hospital so he could receive life-saving specialist care after a major stroke. The brave youngster underwent emergency brain surgery – in which he also had a cardiac arrest – in order to save his life. Due to the intensity of his stroke, Rafi then had to battle 'locked-in syndrome' where he could neither move nor communicate. As he began to make progress, he had yet another stroke and then spent the following five months recovering.

During this time, Rafi's family – including his three sisters, Mum Jackie and Dad Colin – could be by his bedside thanks to The Sick Children's Trust. The Sick Children's Trust provided the family with free accommodation at Treetop House, located just a lift ride away from the Paediatric Intensive Care Ward where Rafi was. **Jodie, who is currently a second year student at Leeds Beckett University, says:**

"Rafi was never alone during the six months he was at Sheffield Children's Hospital; this is because The Sick Children's Trust was there for us, so we could be there for him. For six months, we were given a room – free of charge – which was located in Treetop House, a 'Home from Home' found on the top floor of the hospital. Because of Treetop House we could stay with Rafi right until he dropped off to sleep and we could be by his side as soon as he woke up. Even though my younger sister Nina and I were in school and college, we could visit every evening and be there to support Rafi and my parents.

"Treetop House was very essential to Rafi's recovery, he must have been so frightened – but at least he had his entire family by his side.

"We were told that Rafi may not survive on two occasions, but here he is, three years on and doing really well and he doesn't let the fact that he's in a wheelchair hold him back. He does horse riding, rock climbing, and swimming – he's also recently joined the local RaceRunning team and I was told he is the fastest under 17 in the country!

"Rafi and I are very close, I see him as my best friend. We were all devastated when he became so ill but I do think it's made us all closer as I know not to take my family for granted."

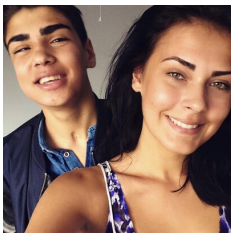
Jodie and Team Entourage will be running the 5k Colour Me Rad event on Saturday 21 May to say thank you to The Sick Children's Trust for its support. **Treetop House Manager, Ann Wyatt, says:**

"Rafi's family's story just shows how vital it is for a child to have their loved ones by their side when they are going through such an ordeal. The Sick Children's Trust believes that keeping families together aids the recovery of a sick child which is what the Solaiman's believed happened with Rafi.

"Treetop House is just one out of ten 'Homes from Home' supporting families with seriously ill children across the country. It costs on average £30 to support a family for one night in one of our 'Homes from Home' and as a charity, we rely entirely on voluntary donations to continue running the houses. That's why we are so grateful to Jodie and her team for choosing to fundraise for us."

To support Jodie, and read more about her story, please visit:
https://www.justgiving.com/team-entourage/

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