Sister's severe car accident sparks fundraising for charity

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A Chesterfield woman has raised over £6,000 after tirelessly fundraising for The Sick Children's Trust following a serious car accident which left her sister in a critical condition in hospital.

Leah Rowles' younger sister, Jael, 15, was involved in a car accident ten weeks ago which resulted in a severe brain injury. She was initially in a coma and is still currently recovering at Sheffield Children's Hospital initially on the High Dependency Unit (HDU), now on the neurological ward and making steady progress. While Jael recovers from the accident, her parents, Priscilla and Adrian, have been given a place to stay at Treetop and Magnolia Houses run by charity The Sick Children's Trust. Support from The Sick Children's Trust means that the family doesn't have to travel 45 minutes every day to be by her side and are only ever a few minutes' walk away from the hospital.

To thank the charity for its support Leah organised a pink themed day at work to raise vital funds to help more families with seriously ill children in hospital with a place to stay. **Leah (28 Marketing Assistant at Atlantic Pumps Limited) said:**

"The support from The Sick Children's Trust is very important to my family as it allows my parents to have a place to stay, free of charge, as close as they can possibly be to Jael during what is an extremely stressful period of our lives. Being able to stay just a few minutes from Jael's hospital bedside and have a direct phone line to the ward has helped to relieve a lot of the stress, worries and concerns we have been experiencing. It is extremely comforting to know that we can always be there for Jael, no matter what time of day.

"Having a place to stay at Treetop House gives my mum and dad a chance to rest and have a break away from the busy hospital environment. Being able to do this is so important because it means they are well-rested and can give my sister the best support possible. For me, having a 'Home from Home' means I can visit most days and we can continue a relatively normal family life. I have been in hospital at Great Ormond Street and my parents were then supported by The Sick Children's Trust, where they stayed in Guilford Street House for a week.

"I wanted to fundraise for The Sick Children's Trust to thank the charity for everything they have done for my family. We decided to organise a pink themed day at work where we dressed in pink clothing, ate pink food and enjoyed pink drinks. Initially the fundraising target was £1,000 but when word got round it wasn't long before the donations came pouring in. We managed to raise over six times that amount in the end with the final total being £6,783. This will allow the charity to support a family for 226 nights, which is amazing as we know first-hand the difference having a place to stay close to a loved one in hospital makes."

The Sick Children's Trust receives no government funding and relies entirely on the generosity of others to ensure families with a seriously ill child in hospital can be together. **Treetop House Manager, Ann Wyatt, said:**

"We are overjoyed with this amazing donation from Leah and we can't thank her and those that donated enough. It costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 a night to support a family to keep them close to their seriously ill child's hospital bedside. This money will go a long way to ensure that we can continue to help more families in the future."

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