Superdad Paul Runs For Charity Which Kept Him By Baby's Side

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The father of a baby who was starved of oxygen for eight minutes at birth will be running The Royal Parks Half Marathon with his sister to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust.

Paul Richardson's son, Zack, was born with complications following a stressful delivery which meant for the first eight minutes of his life he couldn't breathe unaided and was starved of oxygen. Paul and wife Deborah were told Zack needed to be transferred from Broomfield Hospital for specialist cooling treatment at The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, over an hour away.

Zack was separated from his parents as he was rushed to The Rosie for 'cooling' - a therapy to help reduce the risk of brain damage. Over a period of three days Zack's body temperature was dropped to 33 degrees until he was stable enough to warm him back to 36.5 degrees. Zack was then monitored for a further week, undergoing CAT and MRI scans while also taking part in a research project to monitor his brain activity. During his treatment, Paul and Deborah were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation at The Sick Children's Trust's Chestnut House. **Dad Paul, from Chelmsford, says:**

"When they told us Zack was going to Cambridge my immediate thought was that I would have to book us into a hotel, but the wonderful staff at Broomfield arranged a room for us at Chestnut House – a 'Home from Home' run by The Sick Children's Trust. It was one less thing to think about and was a real relief. By the time we arrived to see Zack, it was really late. We spent an hour with him and then were able to go to Chestnut House to try and get some rest – we had been up nearly 24 hours by this point and were emotionally and physically drained.

"Zack underwent intense treatment in the first couple of weeks of his life and eventually we were able to bring him back home at 12 days old. During the time we were at The Rosie Hospital, Chestnut House was a great comfort as we were so close to Zack. There was a time when NICU rang our room directly at 2:00am to say he had suffered a seizure and we were there in five minutes, by his bedside, speaking to the consultant face to face. This would not have been possible without Chestnut House."

Seven month old Zack – who has a trademark Mohican haircut because of the brain activity monitoring – is doing really well. Zack's Auntie Karen - Paul's sister – is also taking part in The Royal Parks Half Marathon for The Sick Children's Trust. **She says:**

"When Paul told us about Chestnut House, we were all surprised such a place existed. Knowing Paul and Deborah had somewhere to properly rest while being with Zack in The Rosie Hospital was a huge relief to the rest of the family. It also meant they could stay together at what was a hugely emotional time for them both. I brought Zack's sister Erica up to visit and was so impressed by Chestnut House. I was amazed to learn more about what The Sick Children's Trust do to support families. It's a privilege to be running this race to raise money for such a wonderful charity that did so much to help my brother and his family."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. Every family is given a private bedroom, with a direct telephone line to the ward, alongside access to communal bathrooms, living areas, kitchens and laundry facilities. **Sick Children's Trust's Community Fundraiser, Zoe Morris says:**

"Paul and Karen are doing really well with their fundraising which will make a huge difference to families who need 'Home from Home' accommodation to stay close to their seriously ill children. It costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night in a 'Home from Home' so we really appreciate Paul and Karen running for us this year."

Paul and Karen will join 39 other runners who have chosen to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust by taking part in the Royal Parks Half Marathon. **Paul adds:**

"Knowing that the money Karen and I raise will help other parents who unfortunately have sick children and need The Sick Children's Trust's support will keep me going during the run. We will always want to show our gratitude to The Sick Children's Trust – especially everyone at Chestnut House. We could spend longer with Zack as we didn't have to travel from Chelmsford and back every day. It gave us a little normality and somewhere we could bring our daughter Erica which wasn't as daunting as the

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hospital NICU unit, for all of that we couldn’t be more thankful.”

For more information on The Sick Children’s Trust, please visit www.sickchildrenstrust.org

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