Young Emma to realise mini marathon dream for twin brother

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For the last ten months, an inspirational little girl has been tirelessly fundraising and training for the Junior Great North Run for The Sick Children's Trust.

Nine year old Emma Hollinshead, from Bedale, has already quadrupled her fundraising goal of £100 for The Sick Children's Trust ahead of this Saturday's race. Emma decided to take on the challenge after she and her family were supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation at The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House when her brother underwent his third open heart surgery last summer at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital.

Twins Emma and Dylan were born in 2007 and while Emma was born well, Dylan was born with a serious heart defect which doctors predicted would give him little to no chance of survival. At just 16 days old, Dylan underwent his first open heart surgery and has since had two more. Fortunately, during his last surgery at Freeman Hospital, Emma could be there for Dylan – to comfort and cuddle him – as Emma along with Mum Laura and Dad Mark were supported by Scott House.

Scott House is located at Freeman Hospital, just a few minutes' walk from the children's heart unit. To thank the charity for its support, Emma will now compete in the Junior Great North Run for The Sick Children's Trust. **Mum Laura Hollinshead says:**

"Scott House gave Emma security and a safe place she could be with both Mum and Dad. And although Emma had to travel an hour to school some days, she had the security of being close to Dylan and still being able to see him thanks to Scott House and The Sick Children's Trust.

"Emma decided that she wanted to run and signed up to do the Junior Great North Run and has pushed herself over the last ten months. She's joined the school running club and has taken part in various running competitions over the last year to make sure she is ready. She is absolutely determined to make this her mission to complete the race for her brother."

Laura, Mark and Emma were supported by The Sick Children's Trust's Scott House for 15 days while Dylan was in hospital. Not only does Laura believe staying just minutes from their son's bedside helped his recovery, but it inspired Emma to do something for charity and helped her focus on something positive. **She continues:**

"I just want to thank The Sick Children's Trust because as a parent of twins - one with a serious medical condition and one a healthy, budding child, there have been times when Emma has had to come second to Dylan's medical needs. And although it's not been easy on Dylan, it's also not been easy on Emma. She's been through it all too, maybe not physically but emotionally and mentally. Running this last year has given Emma a focus, a release and an opportunity to be her own person and stand out, not just as 'the twin sister of the poorly boy', but the young inspiration that she is. I'm so proud.

"Thank you so much to everyone at The Sick Children's Trust. You will never truly know the difference you make in someone's life at such desperate and hard times. Without somewhere like Scott House to rest our heads and have home comforts I don't know how we'd have stayed strong for both Emma and Dylan."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Homes' across the country, including two in the North East which support families with seriously ill children in Freeman Hospital and Royal Victoria Infirmary. **Scott House Manager Andrew Leadbitter says:**

"Emma has completely blown us away with her sheer determination and can-do attitude. She has been a rock for her Mum and Dad and also her brother Dylan, she never stops smiling. Her positivity is contagious. We wish her all the best for her run on Saturday and we can't wait to cheer her across the finishing line."

If you would like to show your support to Emma, please visit:
https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/EmmaHollinshead9

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