



Photo shows: Children's Heart Surgery Mascot Katie Bear and Toby Lancaster presenting a £250,000 cheque to Jane McHale from The Sick Children's Trust for the Big Move Appeal.

Children's Heart Surgery Fund Donates £250,000 to 'The Big Move' Home Stretch for £1.72 million appeal to move vital 'Home from Home'

The Children's Heart Surgery Fund (CHSF) has made a £250,000 donation to the project to move Eckersley House, The Sick Children's Trust (SCT) 'Home from Home' at the Leeds General Infirmary (LGI). This significant and generous donation will fund the completion and interiors of the large communal lounge which form the heart of the New Eckersley House.

Sharon Cheng Charity Director of the CHSF explains, "Every year 10,000 children pass through our paediatric heart unit at the Leeds General Infirmary (LGI) and approximately 330 of these undergo open heart surgery. Over 40% will need long term care. Our patients are from all over Yorkshire, Humberside and the North Midlands, so parent accommodation is vital to cut down travelling time and enable families to be with their sick children as much as possible. We're delighted to donate £250,000 to the appeal, because without Eckersley House, thousands of children will have to undergo treatment without having their parents nearby to offer the support and love they need."

The SCT is working to raise the final £500,000 in their £1.72 million pound campaign to move Eckersley House to its new site at the Leeds General Infirmary. This ensures that the very basic of all medicines has a chance to work; family love and support. For 16 years Eckersley House has supported the recovery of seriously ill children across Yorkshire by providing high quality accommodation and caring staff for families, just minutes away from the hospital wards.

The family of little Toby Lancaster is just one of those likely to benefit from Eckersley House. Toby, aged three, has a serious heart defect. He has spent many weeks on the heart wards at the LGI, has already had two major operations and will have further surgery as he gets older.

Toby, from Wakefield, was on hand to present the CHSF's cheque to the SCT and his mum Joanne said: "When your child is fighting for his life you want to be there alongside him rather than travelling up and down the motorway. Having parent accommodation at the hospital means you can concentrate on your child without having to worry too much about taking care of yourself. It makes a very difficult situation a bit less stressful."

St James's Hospital is moving its children's wards to the LGI to create a paediatric Centre of Excellence. By May 2010 the majority of children's wards will be moved to the new centre. This development means that Eckersley House will no longer be needed in its present location at St James's Hospital, but will be in great demand at the LGI. The move of Eckersley House to the LGI will also mean more bedrooms - from 16 to 22 - to help more families in their time of need.

"The paediatric cardiology services supported by the Children's Heart Surgery Fund are already based at the LGI, but have limited access to parent accommodation and the new Eckersley House facility is badly needed," explains Cheng.

Jane McHale, House Manager at Eckersley House comments: "We often have waiting lists of families with very sick children desperate to find somewhere to stay. It's a tremendous peace of mind to have somewhere comfortable and welcoming to stay when your child is seriously ill, and the Children's Heart Surgery Fund donation is another giant step towards the successful relocation of Eckersley House. This appeal means we can help more families in their time of need – and we're delighted that we'll now be able to help the families of children with heart problems."

The Sick Children's Trust is hosting the **Tower Power Challenge**. 30 Storeys, 600 steps and one great cause. The Sick Children's Trust (SCT) is organising a tower run up the tallest building in Yorkshire, Bridgewater Place in Leeds on the 22nd of May 2010. Lace up those sneakers and download that sponsorship form and sign up for the 2010 Tower Power Challenge. Be one of 300 hundred people running up 600 stairs in this adrenaline fuelled tower race. www.sickchildrenstrust.org

Ends

Pic ref: CHSF.jpg

Pic caption: Katie Bear, Toby Lancaster and Jane McHale.

For more information: Please contact Sarah Wallace on 020 7791 2266 or email sarah@sickchildrenstrust.org

Notes to Editors:

About The Sick Children's Trust

If you would like to get involved in 'The Big Move' fundraising campaign – perhaps by making a donation or organising a fundraising event - or would like further information about the campaign please contact Vicki Smith, Regional Fundraiser, based at Eckersley to be the contact for the appeal now. Her number is 0752 5424406 or email is vicki@sickchildrenstrust.org

The Sick Children's Trust was founded in 1982 by two paediatric specialists Dr Jon Pritchard and Professor James Malpas. They believed that having parents on hand during hospital treatment benefited a child's recovery.

Today we have seven 'Homes from Home' at major hospitals around the country where families can stay free of charge, for as long as they need whilst their child is undergoing treatment – Eckersley House being one of them. There is a growing demand for our 'Homes from Home' as children must increasingly travel long distances to get the specialist treatment they need. To date we have helped more than 30,000 families.

About the Children's Heart Surgery Fund

The Children's Heart Surgery Fund is a registered charity based at the Yorkshire Heart Centre in the Leeds General Infirmary. This covers Yorkshire, Humberside and the North Midlands. The CHSF funds valuable equipment, resources and research for the treatment of children with heart defects and provides a happy and relaxed atmosphere within the hospital for both the children and their families. Our aim is to ensure that these children have the best possible chance of survival

For further information, please contact Sharon Cheng (Charity Director) on 07792 120898 or Jon Arnold (Trustee) on 07971 611 490. Our website address is www.chsf.org.uk