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CHRISTMAS APPEAL LAUNCHES TODAY

By **CHRISTINA EARLE**
Health Editor

THE Sun today launches its annual Smiles at Christmas campaign, this year supporting a charity helping families with kids battling cancer.

Each day in the UK, 11 children such as three-year-old Callum Tolley are diagnosed with the disease. But with **YOUR** help, we can bring them some festive cheer.

We are asking our army of generous readers to donate to the appeal with CLIC Sargent.

You will be funding accommodation near hospitals at ten of the charity's Homes From Homes around the country, which will be full with 92 families.

Our 2017 campaign will also pay for specialist nurses who look after the children and organise parties for the poorest, along with support for families.

Little Callum will be given his Christmas dinner this year through a tube in his nose in a hospital isolation unit as he fights leukaemia.

His parents Natalie and Daniel, both 27, have made the heart-wrenching decision not to see their other two children - Lucas, six, and Ethan, 15 weeks - until January so they can be at Callum's side.

Just one germ could be enough to kill him, which has forced the family to separate for six weeks. The brave lad must have full-body radiation treatment and chemotherapy, in an effort to destroy his immune system before he has a life-or-death stem cell transplant.

The Tolleys have already had their family Christmas at home in Northwich, Cheshire.

'When leukaemia returned it was a knife in our hearts'

The only thing keeping him going this festive season will be the company of his mum and dad.

Daniel, an IT technician, said: "I never thought Callum would be spending Christmas in hospital, especially in an isolation unit."

"Although it is very hard missing our other children's Christmases, especially Ethan's first, it is vital for us to be with Callum."

"It has crossed my mind our 'fake' Christmas might have been our first and last as a family of five, which makes staying near Callum all the more important."

CLIC Sargent supports around 3,800 children and young people over Christmas, in hospital and at home.

Callum, who is being treated at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, was 11 weeks old when diagnosed with the blood cancer in December 2014.

He had eight cycles of chemotherapy, leaving him with third-degree burns on his bottom.

The treatment appeared to work, and three months later the family was told he was in remission.

But in July this year they realised something was wrong when Callum became irritable and stopped sleeping. Hospital tests confirmed the worst.

Daniel said: "When we found out the leukaemia had returned it was like a knife in our hearts. Because of the stress, Natalie went into labour with Ethan a week early."

"I just didn't want our lovely little boy to go through all of the horrible treatments again."

Sadly, their nightmare has become a reality. Callum went into the children's hospital this week.

In the next few weeks he will undergo daily radiation treatment, which involves doctors giving him a general anaesthetic twice a day.

The side-effects include severe burns, which turn to

Cal will get his Xmas dinner from a tube. But thanks to this charity at least we can be close to him

BRAVE... leukaemia sufferer Callum



FAMILY'S FIGHT... Callum, centre, with Natalie and Daniel and brothers Lucas and Ethan



LITTLE CRACKER... playful Callum

painful blisters, and heat-stroke. Once the doctors believe they have sufficiently suppressed his immune system, they will attempt to replace it with donor stem cells.

If successful, Callum's recovery should take four weeks.

Daniel said: "We hoped we would be able to use the stem cells in Ethan's umbilical cord, but it wasn't enough of a match."

"Fortunately, a suitable donor has been found in Germany, allowing Callum the best possible chance of recovery."

"For someone so tiny, he's been through so much. He is on a morphine drip to help control his pain and is being fed with a nasal tube. He won't get to enjoy Christmas Day like many other boys and girls."

"We just hope he'll get to enjoy the next one."

Callum, who loves jigsaw puzzles, playing Sonic the Hedgehog and watching Paw Patrol, is expected to sleep throughout most of Christmas Day while dosed up on painkillers.

"Without generous donations from people like you, we would not be able to spend Christmas with our poorly little boy."

Big brother Lucas said: "I love Callum and want him to get better."

"It is horrible I can't have Christmas with him."

"But I hope he comes back from hospital feeling better and that we can play together again in January."

The children's cancer charity was formed 12 years ago after two organisations merged.

Sargent Cancer Care For Children was founded in 1968, in memory of British conductor and composer Sir Malcolm Sargent, who died of pancreatic cancer the previous year.

It joined forces with CLIC, which stands for Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood, and was founded in 1976 by Bob Woodward. His son Robert died

from cancer in 1977 aged 11.

Since its formation in 2005, CLIC Sargent has helped an estimated 35,254 children with cancer and their families.

Chief executive Kate Lee said: "We are so grateful to Callum and his family for helping to launch the Smiles at Christmas appeal. With the help of Sun readers, CLIC Sargent's dedicated team can help change the lives of children and young people with cancer this Christmas and beyond. I can't describe how exciting it is that Sun readers will be joining our fight for young lives against cancer."

"Please dig deep and give whatever you can afford so CLIC Sargent can be there for more families such as Callum's when they need us most."

WHAT YOUR MONEY COULD BUY

- £1.25 cups of tea
- £2.50 Box of chocs
- £4 A CLIC Sargent storybook explaining childhood cancer simply
- £5 Colouring pens and paper
- £5 Christmas baubles and tinsel decorations
- £8 Support booklet for parents and carers
- £9 Roasting tray to cook the Christmas turkey
- £10 Cost of a Barbie doll
- £10 For a child or their brothers
- and sisters to enjoy a Christmas party
- £14 Home From Home duvet
- £15 CLIC Sargent's DVD to help families who have lost a child to cancer
- £25 "Big Bag" containing a washbag and essentials, tea and coffee, travel mug and cuddly toy for those who start treatment this Christmas
- £33 Cost of one family's stay per night at a Home From Home
- £50 Christmas tree at Home From Home



Smiles at Christmas with CLIC SAGENT

HOW TO DONATE

CALL: 0800 144 5535 to make a payment over the phone

TEXT: SMILE to 70500 to donate £5

POST A CHEQUE TO: Smiles At Christmas, CLIC Sargent, The Data Solution Centre, Manton Wood Enterprise Park, Worksop, S80 2RT

CLICK: clicsargent.org.uk/ smilesatchristmas to donate online

CASH: You can also donate in any JD Wetherspoon pub, where there will be collection buckets



T&Cs: Texts cost £5 plus one standard network-rate message. CLIC Sargent will receive 100% of your donation. Texts will be charged at your network's standard message charge. Terms: clicsargent.org.uk/textdonation. If you have any questions or need to update your information, please call CLIC Sargent on 0300 3300803 (Option 2). Donations will be distributed across the work of CLIC Sargent to help children, young people and their families in the fight against cancer. Registered charity number 1107328 and registered in Scotland SC039857.

