



Claire Cullum Jay and Abi Cullum

Abi and Claire recently made a donation of £25,000 to the Chestnut Tree Hospice, near Arundel, which cares for children and young adults with life-limiting illnesses.

"The hospice is clearly set up to make children feel at home and to give parents the help they must desperately need," says Claire. "In the end, though, when I saw the Chapel of Rest it really hit me how painful things must be for parents and how important Chestnut Tree is."

Claire and Abi's donation will go towards providing a special bed for the hospice and will also support Jack's Birthday Wish Appeal. This appeal was inspired by the wishes of a couple whose son Jack died at the hospice on his first birthday in January 2007. The aim is to raise £500,000 to get another room open at the hospice by Jack's birthday on

January 11 so that more families can benefit from the same special care.

"We wanted to do something to make sure he wasn't forgotten," says Jack's mum, Karen Blunsdon. "He was such a strong little boy."

"Chesnut Tree was a life-line during the last six months of our son's life," says Karen. "They don't just look after your child, they look after you, too. It felt like being wrapped up in a great big hug."

Jack had X-linked myotubular myopathy, a very rare condition which causes profound muscle weakness for which there is no known cure. The hospice enabled Jack to try lots of things he would never have had the chance to otherwise – such as swimming in the hydrotherapy pool and the excitement of the multi-sensory room.

"There are so many good causes that need help but we didn't want to spread

ourselves so thinly that our giving made little difference," adds Claire, whose family trust focuses on a few key areas: homelessness, hospices, animals and children.

"We grew up in Sussex and we love Brighton and Hove and the county," says Claire, "so it was really important to us to make a difference to our local community."

The trust was set up by their father Peter Cullum, formerly a director of London & Edinburgh Group based in Worthing until 1991. Peter is now executive chairman of Towergate Insurance, the largest independently owned insurance intermediary in Europe.

"It is a great privilege to run the trust," says Claire. "We have encountered so many wonderful people who literally spend their lives helping others and it has been a great honour to meet them."