

# Heart unit's play facility set to open

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**A** HEART hero family will open a new play facility at the hospital that saved their son's life.

Inspired parents Ivan and Nadine Hollingsworth have worked tirelessly to raise vital funds to build a new playroom and outdoor play area for poorly children in the North East.

The £333,000 specialist play facility at Newcastle Freeman Hospital's Children's Heart Unit will officially be opened today in front of many families who will benefit from the play area.

In 2009, the hospital saved the life of the Hollingsworths' son Seb, five, and since then the couple have vowed to raise money for the unit, setting up Seb4Chuf.

Father-of-one, Ivan, of Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, is expected to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony with the help of little Seb.

Ivan said: "I'm so excited to have finally reached this day where we get

to see the results of a lot of hard work, blood, sweat and tears from everybody involved with Seb4Chuf. Thinking about this day finally arriving has served as my inspiration for some very dark days in my family's life over the last four or five years.

"I have this unit to thank that my son Seb is here at all. It's testament to the care, dedication and skills of everyone here that one of their own heart patients is fit and healthy enough to be officially opening the new facility this morning. He's a very excited young boy.

"It's humbling to think we've raised enough to completely fund this entire unit.

This will be a very special day, knowing that this will be the start of hundreds of other young boys and girls benefiting from this facility for many years to come."

Ivan, a pharmaceutical rep, has undergone many difficult challenges to help raise vital funds, and last year he was made a trustee of the Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF).

The 38-year-old has skied down a mountain in a mankini, run 100

miles in less than 24 hours, and charged through countless marathons and half marathons for the unit.

He has also led a group of daredevils in epic Coast to Coast challenges to raise money for the heart unit.

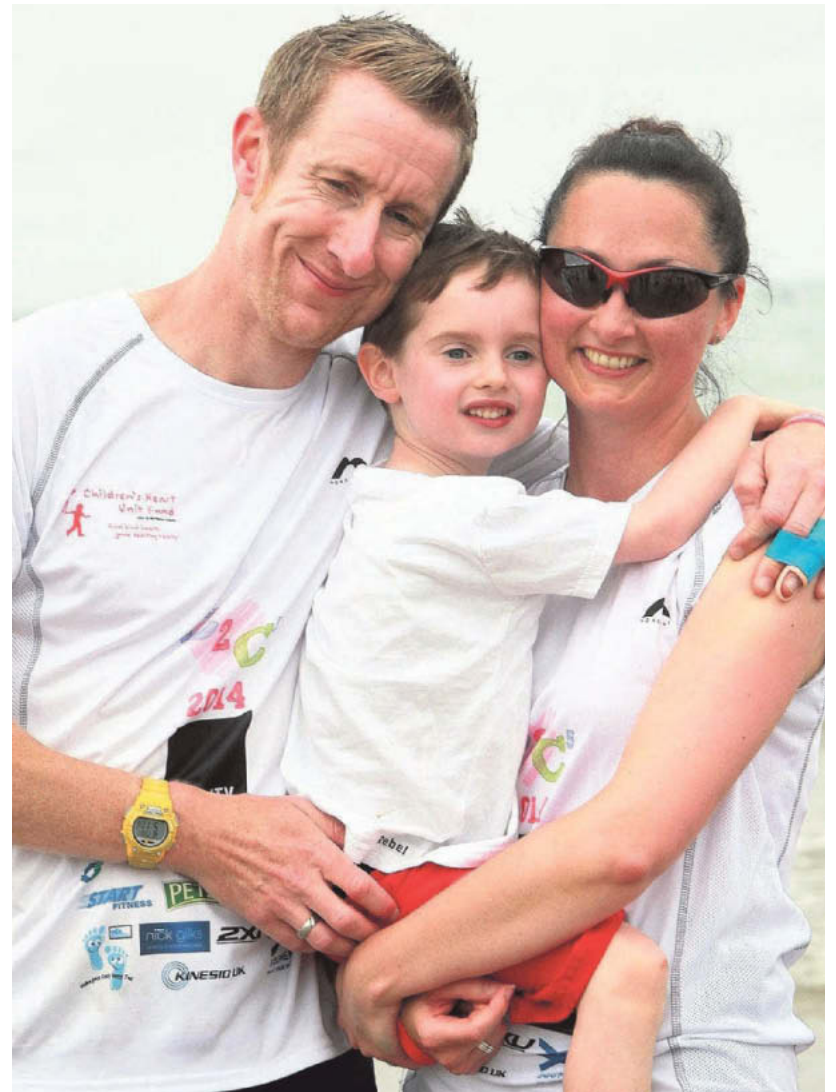
The play facility, which includes technologically-advanced indoor and outdoor equipment, covers a vast 3,649sqft space.

It includes special zones for all ages, including messy areas, tech zones with video games and wide-screen 3D TVs, play kitchen, arts and craft and a mini outdoor "city", complete with a railway station and painted train tracks and roads.

The existing sensory room, created via donations from Metro Radio's fundraising efforts for Cash For Kids, is incorporated into the new facility.

Ivan and Nadine may have hit their fundraising target, but they do not have any plans to stop raising funds for CHUF.

For more information about seb4chuf or to give a donation visit [www.seb4chuf.org.uk](http://www.seb4chuf.org.uk)



► Ivan, Nadine and son Seb

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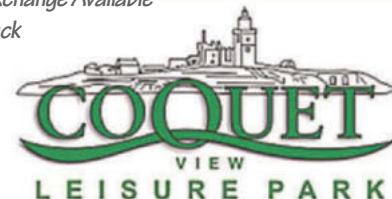


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