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For immediate release

FAMILY OF FORMER SUNDERLAND GOALKEEPER OPEN NEW FACILITY FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

The family of a former Sunderland football player who inspired an appeal to improve facilities for disabled children has opened a new hydrotherapy pool in North Tyneside.

An appeal to help fund the construction of a £1million state of the art pool at Percy Hedley School in Killingworth was set up in memory of former Sunderland goalkeeper Tim Carter in 2008.

Tim's wife Gina, daughter Sasha and son Jensen, a pupil at the school, were joined by Sunderland 1953 FA Cup winner Jimmy Montgomery and Paralympic swimming champion Josef Craig to officially open the Percy Hedley Hydrotherapy Pool.

The facility will enable the charity to offer vital hydrotherapy, which provides invaluable benefits to disabled children and adults with cerebral palsy.

The neurological condition affects movement and coordination, but in warm water these restrictions are reduced, giving the chance for exercise, free movement and relaxation in a multi-sensory and fun environment.

The hydrotherapy pool will also be used to develop water sports and will be a national centre for Halliwick Swimming, a method of teaching disabled children to swim.

Furthermore, the pool will also assist the rehabilitation of adults with acquired neurological conditions and injuries.

"We are absolutely delighted to open the Percy Hedley Hydrotherapy Pool," Gina said.

“We are immensely proud of what has been achieved since the appeal began. It’s not just my family that has made this happen, a lot of people have been involved and we are extremely grateful to each and every single person that has supported and raised money.

“If you go for a run you have a warm bath to relieve your aches – that feeling is constant for children like Jensen so it is paramount they have access to hydrotherapy. I hope many children can benefit from using the pool.”

The construction of the hydrotherapy pool was supported by The Percy Hedley Foundation’s Splash Appeal and is part of a bigger £4million capital appeal that has also seen the construction of a new 26 bed children’s home.

Bradbury View, which is based next door to the hydrotherapy pool, will provide 52 week residential placements, essential short break and respite provision in a home from home environment for children and their families.

Carole Harder, Chief Executive at The Percy Hedley Foundation, added: “This is a momentous day for the Foundation and for disabled children and their families.

“It is one of the very few places in the country which offers families a purpose built residential unit, access to outstanding education provision and a state of the art hydrotherapy pool. It will make such a difference to so many people.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

The Percy Hedley Foundation is a registered charity that works to help meet the needs of disabled children and adults.

The Foundation is one of the largest regional charities supporting disabled people and provides a wide range of high quality, specialist and personalised care and education support to over 1,000 families each year.

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