**DIY SOS takes on towering challenge in Blackpool for BBC Children in Need**

Nick Knowles, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen and the ‘Purple Shirts’ team venture to Blackpool to tackle a DIY SOS Special. *DIY SOS: Million Pound Build for BBC Children in Need* is set to capture the nation’s heart as it looks at the lives of some of the UK’s young carers supported by Blackpool Carers Centre, which receives BBC Children in Need funding. The DIY SOS team, along with hundreds of volunteers, transform the centre creating an inspiring haven for the young carers.

During the special, to be broadcast during the BBC Children in Need Appeal week on Thursday 17th November, viewers will meet some of the incredible young carers who rely on the centre for support including sisters Tyanna, 11, and Gracey, 10. The siblings cook, bathe and generally care for their disabled mother, Suzanne, a former nurse, who was diagnosed with osteoporosis, as well as their dad, Sean, who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Speaking of her daughters and the importance of the carers centre, Suzanne said;

“Some days I can’t get out of bed and people don’t see that. They don’t see what the girls see. The whole family dynamic in the house has changed now. The girls do everything. … From making tea to doing the washing and getting me out of bed. They’re unbelievable little girls. Without the carers centre we would have really struggled these last few years. They’re a life line for us.”

The hour-long programme sees the dramatic reinvention of a site occupied by Blackpool Carers Centre which Tyanna, Gracey and many other young people with caring responsibilities depend on. The building is transformed from a run-down, neglected Victorian house to an unrecognisable, inspiring and colourful base for the young carers. Despite the challenges along the way, the DIY SOS team are helped by generous donations of £1million worth of goods, services and time from suppliers and volunteers, many of whom travelled from up and down the UK to help in any way they could.

Nick Knowles, DIY SOS presenter, said:

“This has been one of the most incredible shows I’ve ever been involved with, and that’s saying something as I’ve worked with DIY SOS for many years now! There were so many twists and turns with the completion of the build but what really makes the programme is the amazing young carers we were lucky enough to meet along the way, they’re an inspiration. I encourage the public to tune in and to help us raise more money than ever for BBC Children in Need.”

Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, TV personality and interior designer on the show, added:

“This project was special. Not just because it was for BBC Children in Need but because the young carers that we met along the way were such selfless young people, I knew we had to pull out all of the stops with the transformation of a centre they rely on. I think viewers will be truly surprised and delighted with the transformation of this build and the emotional roller-coaster that the show will take them on.”

Blackpool Carers Centre uses BBC Children in Need funding to provide out-of-school respite and training activities as well as peer support for young carers. The Centre uses the funding to arrange fun confidence building trips such as bowling and swimming, it is also able to provide workshops including painting and gardening. The activities aim to give the children and young people socialising opportunities to spend time with other young carers, hoping to reduce any isolation they might be experiencing and give them valuable breaks from their caring responsibilities. Commenting on the show, the Centre’s CEO Michelle Smith said:

“We are astonished by the efforts of DIY SOS and BBC Children in Need, not to mention the volunteers and people who donated supplies; their support has been beyond what we could have ever imagined. This renovation will enable us to help improve the lives of more children and young people with caring responsibilities who are in need of our support both now and in the years to come. We can’t wait to watch the show together with young people we support – we’ve no doubt it will be sensational.”

DIY SOS: Million Pound Build for BBC Children in Need airs on **Thursday** **17th November at 8.00pm, BBC One**.

**~ENDS~**

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**Image caption:**

*DIY SOS renovates Blackpool Carers Centre for BBC Children in Need. Tune in to see the full transformation in DIY SOS: Million Pound Build for BBC Children in Need* *at 8.00pm on Thursday 17th November, BBC One.*

**Notes to Editors:**

**About BBC Children in Need**

BBC Children in Need’s vision is that every child in the UK has a safe, happy and secure childhood and the chance to reach their potential.  The charity believes this will be realised by supporting, promoting and publicising work that addresses the challenges that children and young people face and work that builds their skills and resilience.

BBC Children in Need is currently supporting 2,400 projects that are working with children facing a range of disadvantages for example, poverty and deprivation; children who have been the victims of abuse or neglect or disabled young people.

More information on the charity is available via [bbc.co.uk/pudsey](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey)

**About Blackpool Carers Centre**

Blackpool Carers Centre is the single point of access for young carers in Blackpool.

A young carer is a person under 18 who provides unpaid care for a parent or other family member. Young carers are forced to grow up early and miss out on the same opportunities as other children because they care for family members who are disabled or chronically ill, or for adults who are misusing alcohol or drugs.

We offer a wide range of family services including emotional and practical support for over 400 young carers from the age of 5 years.

More information on the Charity is available via ww.blackpoolcarers.org