

The best gift ever for Jack Close

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IT'S the Christmas little Jack Close won't forget.

While his friends were wishing for presents from Santa he was wanting a bone marrow donor to be found.

His dream came true two months ago and he now awaits an operation early in the New Year.

His parents, Bryce, 48, and Laura, 39, believe 2008 will be their best year yet and are planning a holiday abroad after Jack has recovered.

And eight-year-old Jack told how he hopes to get his second wish on his Christmas list.

"My main wish came true, now I want a Nintendo DS so I can play with it when I have to go to hospital," said Jack, of

Rowlands Gill, Gateshead.

This time last year uncertainty hung over the youngster after he was diagnosed with the rare blood condition called Chronic Granulomatous Disorder (CGD) which is wrecking his immune system.

It means cells in his bone marrow can not fight off bacteria and Jack is therefore susceptible to serious infection.

He can't play like his friends as he has to stay away from damp and dusty conditions. He can't play near lakes or rivers, he's not allowed in playgrounds that have damp bark chippings and he can't even clean out the straw for his two rabbits for fear of catching an infection that could potentially lead to death.

But in October his family got the call they had been waiting for from Newcastle General Hospital saying a donor had been found and the operation could go ahead in the Spring.

A month earlier the Chronicle launched our Give Jack A Chance campaign after we revealed the family's battle.

And companies across the region set up bone marrow clinics to find a match for Jack.

Laura, of South Sherburn, Rowlands Gill, said: "We will enjoy this Christmas. We are still keeping our fingers crossed that everything will go OK and the operation goes ahead, but we think 2008 will be a great year for us.

"Last Christmas Jack had been diagnosed and this Christmas we have found the donor we have been looking for."

The Close family hope the operation will take place in late February or early March.

Jack will have to stay in hospital for up to three months after surgery.