



## BRIGHTER 2008 FOR CHRISTMAS BIRTHDAY GIRL

20 December 2007

Twelve months after a life-saving bone marrow transplant, Savannah can look forward to her second birthday on Christmas Day at home with her mum, Lisa Nicholls, and two sisters, Chelsi and Taila Jade. For the family it has been a traumatic year, one in which Savannah has spent 10 months in hospital, four of them in an isolation unit.

She faces a long struggle if she is to ever be able to lead a normal life but the outlook for the little girl, who was diagnosed at the age of five months with a rare form of leukaemia, is as bright now as it has been for the whole of 2007.

And to mark her improved health and a return to proper family life, last week a special service of celebration for Savannah's life was held at Trinity Church, Newlyn, for family and friends. Lisa said the Rev Julian Drew conducted a "really lovely" service before a lively and happy family get-together at the Astropark and she is now looking forward to Savannah's birthday and a brighter start to 2008.



Back in January, Savannah was so ill consultants at Bristol Hospital for Sick Children said there was nothing more they could do for her.

Lisa called family members from Cornwall, Sussex and Somerset to come to Bristol to say goodbye.

"I thought she would die in my arms," said Lisa. But slowly she came back from the very brink - as much through her own willpower as anything else.

Nevertheless, Savannah has had to suffer one problem after another - the side effects of chemotherapy, uncontrollable shaking, two broken legs (because of her extremely frail physique) and countless infections. She's also had scarring both to brain tissue and her lungs.

And it is only in the last few weeks that Lisa has been able to feed Savannah some yoghurt and mashed banana instead of food being fed to her intravenously.

Lisa has nothing but praise for doctors and nursing staff at Bristol and the Royal Cornwall Hospital at Treliske who have become like family members during a very traumatic period of her life and insists people should not feel sorry for her.

"I'm all right - there's nothing wrong with me," she says. "I just think about Savannah and the fact that she will be battling all her life."

Whatever the future holds Lisa says she will not forget everyone's support over the past 18 months.

"People have been brilliant; ever since we made the appeal for potential bone marrow donors, the support has been incredible.

"I really don't think we could have got where we are today without that help and I will never forget people's generosity."