



Dawn Colton

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue

“Being at Harcombe House as a family gave us some much-needed laughter we'd been struggling to find at the time”



While in the thick of a family crisis, it can be difficult to find the joy in everyday life. But for Dawn Colton and her family, being covered in mud in the woods of Harcombe House, they finally found the laughter they'd so desperately been craving.

“My husband, Lee, had a really tough time at the beginning of the year, and after nearly having a breakdown was referred to The Fire Fighters Charity,” says Dawn. “He went down to Harcombe for a week and was offered so much support and advice that really helped him. I'm forever grateful that he had somewhere to turn. He took real comfort from being there during what was a very difficult time for him.”

Joined by their two sons, Dawn went down to stay with Lee for the weekend, where, she says, she got to experience the magic for herself: “We saw first-hand what the Charity does and met other people being supported there,” she says. “It's such an impressive place, surrounded by untouched beauty. We went for walks in the woods, saw the deer and just enjoyed each other's company.”

On one particular walk, Dawn slipped and fell in the mud. What may have been a moment of stress in everyday life, became her highlight of the weekend: “We got a bit lost, and then I fell in the mud and suddenly we were all just laughing. At home we wouldn't want to get dirty, but we just thought, sod it, we can shower back at the bungalow. We stuck our fingers in the mud and wiped it on our faces like warpaint, splashing around in puddles and kicking mud at each other. We had so much fun, and it was some laughter that we'd been struggling to find at the time. It would be ignorant of us to say that things up to that point hadn't impacted on the children. But we just laughed so much together, it was a weekend that will never be forgotten in our family.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/dawn-colton

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