



Claire Allen

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue

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For single parent and former retained firefighter Claire Allen, The Fire Fighters Charity plays an important role in her family. Visiting our centres enables her to spend some much-needed recuperative time with her 11-year-old son, Josh, away from the stresses of everyday life.

“Both Josh and I have ADHD, which makes things a constant rollercoaster for living in harmony with each other,” says Claire. “I recently broke up with my long-term partner, who has been the father figure in my son’s life for six years. Josh was expressing a lot of anger at home and staff at his school told me they were concerned at how withdrawn he’d become.”

Claire was anxious about the fast-approaching Easter holidays and how Josh would handle being at home. Having previously visited Harcombe House, she applied for a recuperative break for the pair of them at any of the three centres. Thinking it would be too late, she says her guardian angels intervened: “I never thought we’d be accommodated, so when we were offered a place at Marine Court, I nearly fell off my chair.”

The week in Littlehampton gave them time to bond: “If you asked Josh what his favourite holiday of all time is, he would always say it’s one with The Fire Fighters Charity,” she says. “Both of us are just so much more relaxed, and take time to focus on each other.”

As a single parent, Claire is proud that her role in the fire service enabled her to provide for her son, and she wants more people to cast aside embarrassment in order to accept help: “If you can’t do it for yourself, do it for your kids or loved ones. The staff at his school say they’ve suddenly got the old Josh back. It’s like someone has pushed the reset button, and I’m so glad he’ll be able to remember Easter 2019 in a positive way.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/claire-allen

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