

Bella switches on the Jenners Christmas tree lights

A SEVEN-YEAR OLD who has spent the last five years being treated at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) switched on the lights of one of the city's most impressive Christmas trees.

Bella Rennie, from Prestonpans, East Lothian, lit up Jenners' 40 foot tree at 1pm last month in front of crowds of shoppers who spectated from every floor.

With her proud mum Jane and sister Poppy standing by her side in the famous Princes Street store, little Bella turned on the 10,000 lights, giving Edinburgh the clear sign that Christmas is officially on its way.

Bella has visited and stayed in the RHSC regularly as she was diagnosed with brain and spinal tumours when she was just two years old.

During her time there, Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (EHC) has supported and cared for her, making sure that she has fun and feels comfortable while she's away from home.

Bella's mother, Jane, Rennie said: "Bella was so excited. She's picked out her outfit – a sparkly dress – well in advance!

"EHC have done wonders to make sure that Bella doesn't miss out on her childhood when she's in hospital – from art and crafts to storytelling, the charity makes sure that Bella has a familiar face and a fun activity to keep her busy."

The opportunity to switch on the tree lights at Jenners was donated to an ECHC auction by the department store. The prize was won by two very generous ladies, who kindly donated it back to the charity to give to a child.

Jane added: "It was such a lovely gesture – the spirit of Christmas giving really came early this year."

Bella was also given the opportunity, by Jenners, to pick which tree she wanted for the capital's store.

Amy Ford, Corporate Fundraiser at ECHC, said: "Thanks to our donors, children like Bella can still have fun, activities and surprises while at hospital.

"Christmas is such a magical time of year for us all, and we're doing all we can to make sure that children and young people who will be spending theirs in hospital this year don't miss out.

"So this December, we're asking the public to get involved in any way they can and help us make Christmas at the RHSC a warm and memorable experience."

Alan Thomlinson, General Manager, at Jenners, said: "We have a decades-long relationship with ECHC and donate this prize for auction every year.

"We're incredibly proud to support the important work that ECHC carries out for children, young people and their families and are delighted to be giving this fun experience to Bella this Christmas."

The public can help bring the magic to the hospital this Christmas by texting D00R25 to 70070 to donate £5, or by donating online at www.echcharity.org.

ECHC believe that nothing should get in the way of being a child and exist to transform the experiences of children and young people in hospital, so they can be a child first and

a patient second.

The charity works to make sure that children and young people's lives are less interrupted by illness. It distributes around £1.5 million per year in support of the work of the RHSC and other children's healthcare settings across Scotland.



Poppy, Santa and Bella