

ONE IN A MILLION GESTURE TO SAVE LIVES

Thousands of children will benefit thanks to a million pound donation pledged by one of Manchester's most prominent business figures.

John Whittaker Chairman of the north west based property company Peel Holdings Ltd – owners of The Trafford Centre - is behind the massive cash boost for the city's new children's hospital due to open in 2009.

This is one of the largest single donations to boost the coffers of The New Children's Hospital Appeal and has been earmarked to purchase state-of-the-art imaging equipment which will improve the diagnosis and treatment of conditions such as kidney problems and childhood cancers.

Whittaker was inspired to support the Appeal after tragedy struck his own family when his granddaughter was delivered stillborn in 2003.

He said: "It was too late for my daughter's baby to be given a lifeline but if there are other babies and children who through early diagnosis and high levels of care have that opportunity then that it is a wonderful cause for Peel to support. Children cannot help themselves therefore we owe it to our future generation to provide the best care we possibly can."

The New Children's Hospital Appeal aims to raise £20 million to support projects within the new hospital. As well as providing the latest equipment for diagnosis and treatment the funds will also provide a place for parents to stay while their children are treated.

Whittaker added: "This isn't going to be a one off gesture. The Peel group feel so strongly about what will be a fantastic hospital and a real credit to the city of Manchester and its people - we are now committed to raising further funds through various fundraising activities."

Appeal Chairman, Maurice Watkins commented: "Peel's donation will be used

specifically on the new children's radiology department providing the most up-to-date equipment for better diagnosis. The equipment which will be funded includes some of the most sophisticated paediatric imaging equipment which affects all areas concerned with diagnosing and potential treatment for sick children. Peel's initial support will fund the equipment for two Fluoroscopy Rooms and a Gamma Camera Room which will improve the level of care given to thousands of children across the North West and beyond."

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