

## DONATIONS

# Holiday treat for festive theft family

■ Charity steps in to help make up for Christmas burglary

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A FAMILY from Bury who had presents and valuables worth thousands of pounds stolen just before Christmas are being treated to a holiday later this summer.

Mum-of-two Michelle Longden and partner Leon Cowley were left heartbroken after burglars looted their Vernon Street home in December.

Thieves snatched presents for sons Reece, aged nine — who has special needs caused by congenital myotonic dystrophy and hydrocephalus — and Connor, aged 15.

Michelle Longden, son Reece, Leon Cowley and Louise Dawson of the Trewan Sands Children's Trust



“The boys are over the moon and I'm very excited too

Michelle Longden

But after hearing of the family's plight, Heywood-based charity Trewan Sands Children's Trust approached the family with the offer of a free holiday.

Now, thanks to the charity, Michelle, Leon, Connor and Reece will enjoy a week in Devon Cliffs holiday park, staying in a three-bedroom Prestige caravan.

Teaching assistant Michelle, aged 32, said: “We are very grateful to Trewan Sands Children's Trust. The boys are over the moon and I am very excited too.

“We were not going to be able to go on holiday this year and have not been for the last few years so it has come as an amazing surprise for the whole

family. It is really kind of Louise and everyone at the charity — honestly, it's heart-warming.

“This whole experience has shown us there are some wonderful people out there.”

Michelle and 34-year-old Leon, a postman, were not able to claim on home insurance for any of the items stolen — but were “humbled” by kind donations from readers, neighbours and the Bury delivery office where Leon works.

As well as funding holidays in the UK, Trewan Sands Children's Trust, which formed in April, 2008, enables children to take part in indoor and outdoor activities.

Louise Dawson, a trustee for the charity, said: “We offer holidays to disabled and terminally ill children, and after reading about the burglary we wanted to offer Reece and his family something to look forward to.

“Caring for a child with a disability can be a huge responsibility, not only physically and mentally but also financially.

“Many families are on a low income or benefits as they are forced to give up work to look after their sick or disabled child, and as such rarely, if ever, get the chance to enjoy a holiday together.

“Our aim is to give families memories to cherish.”

## Wedding Fair

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Child Action Northwest has offices across the Northwest.

We are also looking to recruit foster carers for our 11-18 year old scheme, which allows carers to continue to work alongside fostering.

## DANCE

## Limbering up for NW street dance contest

A RADCLIFFE and Elton-based dance school has been selected to hold a huge street dance competition for the whole of the North West.

Active Dance is hosting the contest on Sunday at Castle Leisure Centre in Bury with Street

Dance International, who selected the dance school as an official partner.

More than 900 competitors and spectators from 15 dance schools across the North West will attend, with dancers competing to qualify for the All England

Championships in Oxford in May.

Celebrity judges include the Urban Jokers Duo, Dominique Jackson, Tachia Newell and Mark Boyce and Jack Bain from Manchester-based street dance crew The Audio Boyz. Operations

director Nicola Cleaver said: “We have dance schools from Rochdale, Bolton, Manchester, Warrington, Wigan and North Wales attending. Last year two of our teams went to Oxford to compete to represent England in Europe.”