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Courtney, 13, treated to trip down memory lane

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A YOUNG girl from Aylesbury who carries the same heart condition which killed her mother has revisited the place they last went on holiday, thanks to a children's charity.

Courtney Turner, 13, of Prebendal Avenue, Southcourt, suffers from dilated cardiomyopathy, a condition in which the heart becomes weakened and enlarged, preventing the blood to be pumped around the body efficiently.

While the inherited disease is not always terminal there is no cure for the condition and Courtney's mother Michelle died of the disease three years ago this September.

The affects of the illness varies from patient to patient, but for Courtney it means that a simple chest infection can lead into a life-threatening situation.

After discovering Courtney's situation, children's charity React, paid for the teen and her family to go on holiday to Skegness, the place where she last went on holiday with her mother before she died.

"It was lovely," said Mandeville School pupil Courtney.

"I really enjoyed it.

"It was kind of sad because it was the last place I went with my mum, but it was happy too because it reminded me of so many memories.

"We went to the same beach that I'd gone to with my mum too, which was really nice because it



Courtney Turner with her nan Patsy, and, inset, with her late mum Michelle, who died from the same condition that Courtney suffers from

reminded me of when my mum used to build sand castles with me when I was little.

"We also went swimming and shopping which my mum always loved.

"We bought presents for the family, because my mum always used to buy presents for me and my nan when she had any spare money.

"I think the charity is brilliant, they've really been fantastic.

"They're really caring people.

"They've even helped me to get a

new uniform for school too, because my nan can't work because of her heart condition."

React, which stands for rapid effective assistance for children with potentially terminal illness, is a charity working to improve the quality of life for financially disadvantaged children with life-limiting illnesses living in the UK.

Courtney, who lives with her nan since her mum died, regularly falls ill as a result of her condition, which is made worse by the cold weather.

But her nan Patsy says the teen has been healthier recently, which she puts down to the sea air.

"She's quite a healthy looking little girl at the moment," she said.

"In the winter Courtney often gets a lot of chest infections. In December she had to go to hospital with one, which then turned into

'Courtney's condition is just as severe as her mum's was'

pneumonia.

"She gets ill a lot which is constantly putting strain on her heart.

"We first found out Courtney was ill when she was a baby. She was in hospital for the majority of the beginning of her life.

"Courtney's condition is just as severe as her mum's was.

"She'll be on medication for the rest of her life."

Patsy applied to React for the holiday to Skegness, having learnt about the charity and its work, as Patsy has a milder version of Courtney's disease, which prevents her from working.

"It was absolutely lovely," she added.

"It brought back a lot of memories about Michelle before she died."

For more information about React, which is also appealing for volunteers to come forward, visit www.reactcharity.org or call 020 8940 2575.