PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**11 year old Ned writes “Wimpy Kid” style book to support young people with arthritis**

PEG-LEG is the name of a book written by 11 year old Ned Lowell of Cornwall. It was the nickname given to him by his school friends when he was struck down by a mystery illness and was left reliant on crutches.

Inspired by Jeff Kinney’s Wimpy Kid books, Ned set about writing about his own experiences of what turned out to be arthritis. He writes in a funny and engaging way about his symptoms, diagnosis and treatment. It's a story of hope, a story of not giving up, a story of doing the incredible even though you have juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA).

Around 1 in 1000 children and young people are diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Awareness of the condition remains low leaving children and young people with arthritis feeling stigmatised and alone and, until recently, there was a lack of support and information for families.

Ned has teamed up with Juvenile Arthritis Research, a charity whose vision is a world where no child has to suffer from arthritis, to publish his book and it will be included in their new support packs for teenagers with JIA.

Juvenile Arthritis Research aim to ensure every child and young person with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) has the information and support they need. Their existing “Little Box Of Hope” support packs for younger children have proved to be crucial at a time when families need support. Recognising the gap in support for the 10-16 year old age group, Juvenile Arthritis Research have developed an amazing new support pack for teenagers which will also include a copy of PEG-LEG. Each Teen Support pack will also be full of information about what JIA is, how it is treated, and what to expect in the future. The packs will help young people with JIA know they are not alone, and that someone cares.

This week the charity launched a campaign to raise the £1,000 needed for the initial pilot of the Teen Support pack, and within 24 hours raised half of their target. They would love to smash their target and raise enough to ensure every young person with JIA can receive the support they need.

Being a teenager is hard enough without having a chronic health condition. Juvenile Arthritis Research already have a waiting list of young people in need of support, and hear from new families every day. If you can help them make the Teen Support Pack a reality, visit [www.give.net/teen](http://www.give.net/teen). If you represent a business and would like to get involved as a sponsor of the support packs, please message Juvenile Arthritis Research via [www.jarproject.org/contact-us](http://www.jarproject.org/contact-us)

**About juvenile idiopathic arthritis:**

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (also called JIA) is an autoimmune disease. This means the body’s natural defences (called the immune system) which are designed to fight off viruses, bacteria and infection get confused and start to attack your joints. This causes pain, discomfort, fatigue, and reduced mobility.

Across the UK, around 15,000 children and young people under the age of 16 have been diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), and every week around 20 families are given the news that their child has the condition. Without adequate and prompt treatment, JIA can lead to other health conditions as well as permanent disability and long-term health implications. Some children with JIA develop uveitis, which is inflammation inside their eye. If this isn’t treated promptly, children could lose their sight.

At the moment there is no cure for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. All existing treatments reduce the symptoms of JIA, but are not a cure. Whilst these treatments have beneficial effects in reducing pain and inflammation, and provide some protection against long-term joint damage, they come with their own side-effects and challenges.

You can find out more about JIA in our booklet, My JIA, available as a free download from [www.jarproject.org/myjia](http://www.jarproject.org/myjia)

**About Juvenile Arthritis Research:**

Juvenile Arthritis Research have a vision of a world where no child has to suffer from arthritis. They have three aims – to find a cure for JIA, to raise awareness that children and young people get arthritis, and to provide support to children and their families when they receive a diagnosis of JIA.

You can find out more, and support Juvenile Arthritis Research at [www.jarproject.org](http://www.jarproject.org)

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