Leeds woman runs half marathon one year after brain tumour surgery

Wednesday 18 May, 2022

Robyn Stockwell, aged 30 from Leeds, completed the 13.1-mile Leeds Half Marathon on Sunday 8th May to raise funds for Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity (YBTC).

It marked 1 year and 2 days since Robyn underwent life-changing surgery for a brain tumour, after which she was told it would take 6-12 months to learn to walk and talk again.

Robyn was diagnosed back in April 2021 following a routine optician appointment. The optician asked her if she had banged her head, and immediately referred her to the eye doctor at St James' Hospital.

Robyn said: "All I could think of was, 'did I drink too much prosecco and fall over at the weekend?' After over three hours of waiting, CT scans, multiple doctors doing the same eye movement test, balance test and memory test with me, I was told I had a grade four brain tumour. You always hear about them, but you don't ever think it will happen to you."

After her diagnosis, Robyn was transferred to Leeds General Infirmary.

"When the surgeon said he was amazed that I went to work, ran 10k and drove my car the day before, with the size of the tumour he saw on my MRI results, I knew it was bad. My brain had a lot of fluid on it. You always get told the worst, and all I could think of is how much of my hair would be shaved off."

Robyn's MRI revealed that the tumour was benign and not cancerous. However because of its location in the brain, she was told she would lose all hearing in her left ear and potentially lose movement in the left side of her face following the surgery.

Robyn said: "11 hours of surgery later, I woke up not remembering a thing, but with tubes all over me. I was told I'd be in ICU for 14 days, and that it would take me around 6-12 months to learn to walk and talk again. I was determined to find my balance, and Speech and Language therapists came to see me so I could talk and swallow again. Six days later I was discharged."

Just one year later, Robyn ran the Leeds Half Marathon in 2 hours and 18 minutes. She was joined by her partner Ryan and his brother Adam, who both also decided to support YBTC.

So far, Robyn has raised over £900 on her JustGiving page for YBTC, a small regional charity which offers grants and emotional support to patients and their families, while funding vital research to find a cure.

Robyn said: "As part of my aftercare I was referred to YBTC. The staff at Leeds General Infirmary helped me to physically recover, but YBTC is helping me to mentally recover from this trauma. I can't thank the charity enough for helping me to come to terms with what has happened, supporting me and getting me involved with their events, so I can meet people who have experienced the same journey as me."

If you'd like to support Robyn, go to justgiving.com/fundraising/robyn-stockwell

To find out more about YBTC, go to yorksbtc.org.uk

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