Local Man Braves Open Waters in Memory of Best Friend

Thursday 25 August, 2016

The best friend of a brave 21 year old woman who sadly passed away last summer is hoping to raise £500 in her memory.

22 year old James Brooking, from Cheltenham, will be challenging himself to a three-mile open water swim later this month in a bid to raise money in memory of Lauren Hutchins.

Lauren, also from Cheltenham, fought a lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis and numerous other health conditions. And as her last wish, she asked friends and family to honour her memory by raising money for the charity which provided her and her family comfort during her years of hospital treatment.

James, an estate agent, will be raising money to help continue sponsoring a room in The Sick Children's Trust's Treetop House at Sheffield Children's Hospital. Over the years, Lauren spent many weeks in the hospital and her family were able to stay together, just minutes from her side, at the charity's free 'Home from Home' Treetop House. **He says:**

"When Lauren passed away, not only did I lose my best friend, I lost the love of my life.

"It has been incredibly difficult without Lauren, not hearing her laugh and not seeing her smile. She was a truly good person who saw the best in everyone. She would always put others before herself, help anyone who needed a hand and would brighten everyone's day.

"Lauren's family have been so strong and they have been very supportive. Last year, I did a two mile open water swim in Scotland's Loch Lomond for Cystic Fibrosis Comfort Fund, and knowing how much The Sick Children's Trust's Treetop House meant to Lauren and her family, I wanted to challenge myself a little bit more.

"Treetop House gave so much comfort to Lauren; she had her family with her – even though home was 140 miles away. The charity's 'Home from Home' helped give Lauren a better quality of life and what the charity does is make sure that families can be together during the most difficult of times. When a child or young person is seriously ill, they need their family's support – it's as simple as that – and that is what The Sick Children's Trust gives."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the UK supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. Treetop House is one of two 'Homes from Home' supporting Sheffield Children's Hospital and is just a lift ride away from the wards. **Treetop House Manager, Ann Wyatt says:**

"Lauren really has left a wonderful legacy and we are so honoured that Treetop House is part of that. Lauren's friends and family have raised an incredible amount for The Sick Children's Trust over the last year and with that have supported hundreds of families and helped them stay close to their loved ones. We wish James the best of luck with his swim and would like to thank him for choosing to do this in Lauren's memory."

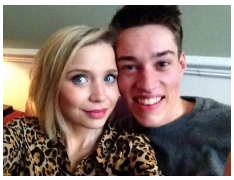
James, who used to swim competitively nationally, will be taking part in the Great Scottish Swim in Loch Lomond on 27 August. **He adds:**

"Lauren would always tell me not to give up on swimming, so even though I know it's going to be hard and challenge me completely – I know I'll be making her proud."

To sponsor James, please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/James-Brooking1

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