Running to raise tinnitus awareness

Tuesday 26 January, 2021

22-year-old Politics student from University of Bradford, Zbigniew Pawel Soj (Paul), has challenged himself to walk 100km this month in support of the British Tinnitus Association (BTA), a charity that has helped him manage his tinnitus, a debilitating condition that affects an estimated 54,000 adults in the city of Bradford alone, and a total of 245,000 people across West Yorkshire.

Paul has lived with tinnitus for just over a year now after experiencing a lot of stress caused by various factors in his life. He shared “At first, I started noticing some quite high-pitch sounds in my left ear that were getting louder and louder.” After many medical examinations, including an MRI, Paul had no answers as to what had caused his tinnitus. “I was simply told to learn how to live with that on my own.”

“I was really struggling with my daily life that involved studying, working and socialising. The high-pitch sound in my head was often so loud that I could not focus on anything unless I had a device playing some white noise next to me. I also suffered from insomnia for a couple of months, which made me down every day as I lacked enough sleep. I started losing any hope that my life would ever get better. It was truly the darkest time I have been ever through so far.”

“Nevertheless, I found light at the end of this deep and black tunnel”. Paul introduced new management techniques to his life, including neuromodulation and physical activity, which have helped him live well with his tinnitus. “I attended group sessions and workshops organised by the BTA, which increased my knowledge of this illness and made me aware about a huge number of people at different ages who have the same problem. I have become a member of the association to support it on a way to creating the world where no one suffers from tinnitus any longer.”

As well as completing his fundraising challenge, Paul will also be supporting Tinnitus Week which begins on 1 February. The BTA are campaigning to make sure that everyone with tinnitus gets the right information, from the right place, at the right time. The BTA are asking people to share their experience of tinnitus as part of their social media campaign #ThisIsMySilence to raise awareness.

The British Tinnitus Association’s vision is “A world where no one suffers from tinnitus” which Zbigniew fully supports. He is hoping that his fundraising challenge will get people taking about tinnitus and raise the vital funds needed to make sure people can access the support they need now, and fund future tinnitus research, to ultimately find a cure.

The BTA’s Fundraising Officer Jess Pollard commented “Paul has overcome so much in the last year and we’re so grateful that he is now able to share his experience to support others and to keep raising awareness!”

Please support Paul by donating at justgiving.com/fundraising/zbigniewpawelsoj, or email fundraising@tinnitus.org.uk take part in your own challenge.

- Ends -

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Editors Notes

- The British Tinnitus Association (BTA) is an independent charity that supports over one million people living with tinnitus each year, and advises medical professionals around the world. It is the primary source of support and information for people with tinnitus in the UK.
- Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing noises in your ear or head when there is no external cause. The noise can have virtually any quality including ringing, buzzing, hissing and whistling.
- Around 1 in 3 people will experience tinnitus at some point in their life. Over 7.1 million adults in the UK are living with persistent tinnitus, and for 10% of them, it can severely impact their quality of life, affecting sleep, mood, concentration, employment and relationships.

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- There is not currently a cure for tinnitus, however, there are several strategies that can be helpful in learning to manage the condition.
- Tinnitus costs the NHS £750 million annually, with a cost to society of £2.7 billion per year.

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