



Matt's
CanaanTrust

UK Registered Charity: 1114505

TrustNews

Autumn 2009

Holidays for Families Facing Life-Limiting Illness

From Those Whose Lives You Touch – Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

One mum writes: "I don't think I really fully expressed how much what you have done for us means to me in particular. All that is important to Becky is family and to actually find somewhere to have us all together for two precious weeks away from it all seemed impossible a few days ago (only solution I could come up with is buying some tents and I would have done that if that is what it would take!)"

With the arrival of September on our doorsteps, thoughts turn to a new school year and decisions that will affect the next twelve months or even the rest of our lives.

But for some, those decisions are not theirs to be made. For some, a life-limiting or terminal illness has sprung up on the radar to steal the future and make suffering and worry, the present reality.

In this time of economic crisis, it is natural to want to put all our resources into securing financial stability for ourselves through difficult times. But for some, the consuming desire to live eclipses everything else.

Whether it's a child or parent who has been diagnosed with cancer, or a loved one dealing with a life-limiting condition, the fallout of such devastating reality is vast. For some this September, life will never be the same.

That's why Matt's Canaan Trust exists. Because one ordinary day our outlook on the future changed forever: a kind of 'ground zero' for us. There's no going back to how

things used to be, but we can go forward. We can choose to look into a mirror, or through a window. We chose the window.

Since the inception of Matt's Trust, we have been privileged to finance holidays and gifts for families in situations like ours. Compared to what we would like to achieve, it is only a drop in the ocean of need, but to the families we have been able to help, it has often been the difference between despair and hope.

We are so grateful for every single donation received, no matter how small. And for every book purchased from Canaan Press, which in turn benefits the Trust. But with the average two week family holiday costing between £1500-£2000, you can appreciate, funds don't go far.

As our main fundraiser, Mark has worked tirelessly this year, taking part in bike rides and triathlons and has been lovingly supported by friends and colleagues at British Airways. But if we are to continue with the Trust, we need to raise more money. PLEASE GIVE WHATEVER YOU CAN to help people in their deepest need. ■



MATTHEW LEITCH

30.12.88 – 24.11.02

Showing We Care

Matt was always looking out for those less fortunate than himself. Family life and especially holidays were important to him. Providing breaks for families facing life-limiting illness would be right up his street!

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It's easy to make a gift to Matt's Canaan Trust

See page 2 for more information.

Recipients Of Your Money

You Are Not Alone

After learning of a very moving situation involving a boy of 15, with a Grade 4 brain tumour, the Trust has paid for some desperately needed house decoration, and hope to contribute something special towards Chris' passion – motor cross. Although he has just received his first clear scan since treatment, it is early days and life is made more difficult because Chris and his mum face this terrifying situation alone. The grandmother died of cancer 4 years ago, grandad has recently suffered a stroke and Chris' dad committed suicide. Thanks for helping us say 'you are not alone'.

Read Chris' story on our website.

Providing Protection

The dictionary definition for orphan is 'a person bereft of protection'. This year we donated some funds from Matt's Trust to an orphanage in Uganda. Children, who have nothing and no one, are cared for and nurtured in an environment of love and family principals. In turn, they are encouraged to be brothers and sisters to the other children in the orphanage. We have had news that the money we donated has provided much needed beds to accommodate additional children.

The Price of a Smile

A very adventurous and capable young woman has worked for some time in Sierra Leone, as a children's physiotherapist. She provides invaluable treatment and help for severely disabled children across a wide territory in that country. Also, with ingenuity and drive, she designs simple wooden equipment that enables her patients to sit or stand upright, often for the first time in their lives, and is training local helpers there to continue her extraordinary work, as a legacy when she returns home next year. As little as £20 can ensure a piece of this life-changing equipment is produced and provided for the young person. A donation this year from the Trust will help to change a life beyond recognition.

For more info go to: www.vez-in-sierraleone.blogspot.com

All three situations, we believe, would be close to Matt's heart. ■

For Some It Becomes Us

'Most often we travel life oblivious of the pain others live with, then sometimes we are drawn a little closer and are desperately grateful that it is not us, and then for some, it becomes us.' (Paul Manwaring – Pastor, Bethel Church Redding, CA.)



John Curtis and wife Gillian.

Father of two, John Curtis was originally diagnosed with bowel cancer in 1995, aged 38. Numerous courses of exhausting treatments and surgery followed, but the cancer metastasized, requiring doctors to remove 70% of his liver in 1999. Miraculously, he survived and eventually returned to full time work, only to be diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in 2004. He almost died from a relapse in 2007, and had part of his lung removed in 2008, and a transplant.

Despite showing incredible fortitude, John shared something of what it is like to deal with life-threatening illness long term, and the effects it has on patients and family members. Not only has John had to face his own fears, but he has seen what devastation his cancers have wreaked on his family.

John contacted us via our web-site, and at his request, Matt's Canaan Trust has financed a holiday for him, his wife Gillian, their two daughters, Laura and Lydia, their partners and his two granddaughters, 7 year old Lilly Rose, and six month old Maisy.



John Curtis after chemo.

For John and his family, the battle is far from over. He has had several emergency admissions to hospital, was given further shattering news in May that he had skin cancer, and underwent urgent surgery to remove lesions from his face.

Providing a short break this month for this family in quiet Yorkshire countryside will allow them the chance to relax, away from their stressful reality; to draw even closer together, and know a peace in the midst of their frightening storm. ■



John with granddaughter, Maisy in March 2009.

Making a Gift

Giving can be a straightforward one-off gift of money, a monthly standing order, buying our books from www.canaanpress.co.uk leaving the Trust something in your will, or organising a fundraising event.

Tea parties, cheese and wine evenings, sponsored slims or beard growing, film evenings, a donation as a birthday or Christmas present, a sporting event, quiz night, evening meal, using **everyclick.com** as your search engine and nominating Matt's Canaan Trust. Richmond to Windsor Bike event 2010. These are just some fundraising ideas.

We have secured 5 places in the first ever Brighton Marathon in April 2010. If you would like to take part in this exciting event to raise money for us, please contact the office for further details. ■

Please use the form on the back page to make a donation.



Bonnie And Me

At 23, Becky Vines was an Independence Tutor for young adults with learning difficulties. She loved her job, and her life which, she saw no reason to doubt, stretched far into the future. Until she began to lose her balance and her right foot started to drag. Scans and tests revealed Becky had a Grade 4 brain tumour (Glioma). She has recently finished a gruelling 6 months of treatment, including an operation, chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Becky's parents have had to close their family business, due in part to the recession, but also to allow them to spend quality time with their daughter. They have creditors to pay off, and funds are extremely limited. We were put in touch with Becky's mum, Claire, who was desperate to organise a family holiday that could include their fireman son, Daniel, his partner, and Becky and her adored West Highland Terrier, Bonnie, who has been her constant companion throughout her treatment.

After much searching on the internet, they agreed on a family lodge holiday in Cornwall, where, as Claire says, they could show Becky beaches that were just as beautiful as the Greek isles in the film 'Mamma Mia'.

So, in July, the Vines, including Bonnie, with her own suitcase, set off for two weeks away together. Daniel and his partner paid for the transportation costs, even though he only had part time work, and Matt's Canaan Trust was able to finance the accommodation.

Above: Becky and Bonnie are inseparable.

In speaking to this family, it is clearly obvious they are very close. Since arranging the holiday for them, the Vines have expressed a desire to give something back to the Trust, and are looking into how they can raise some funds for us to help other families, such as theirs, for which we are sincerely grateful. Dan, who has been accepted as a full-time fire fighter, and his partner Becky, who works as a Scene of Crime Officer, are putting their heads together to come up with some wacky fund raising ideas. Watch this space!

One simple way is through an organisation called Quidco, a UK cashback website. The site earns commission on users' online purchases, and passes that commission back to users in the form of rebates. The Trust has already received some money as a result of Claire's shrewd internet shopping, and we urge you to visit the web-site www.quidco.com to learn how you, too, can help us.

Read more of Becky's amazing story on our website. ■

2009 Fundraising Triathlon

This year saw Tuff Fitty, Mark complete his first Triathlon at Blenheim Palace. Details of his tears, fears and victory can be seen on the website, entitled: *Blazing Saddles, Triathlon Man and It Is Finished.*

Can You Ride Tandem?

Mark took to the saddle again on the 6th September for the Richmond to Windsor Bike Event, joined by his stalwart companions, Javid Rashid, Mike Shears and Paul Mitchell. This year was slightly different as Mark rode tandem with partially sighted Tommy Parvin, 12, whose brother George, 14, rode solo. Fun and glamour was provided by three colleagues from British Airways: Denise Gray, Katherine Totini and Zoe Bates and last minute stand-in Maria. George finished first, in under 3 hours and the whole team turned in performances that could worry the 2012 Olympic cyclists. An unscheduled stop in the Barley Mow at Englefield Green facilitated the descent into Windsor. ■



Above (clockwise): Mark, Denise, Zoe, Katherine, Paul, George and Tommy.



Above (clockwise): Mike, Paul, Maria, Mark, Javid, George and Tommy.

Matt's Canaan Trust

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'Dr. Mark' Did You Know?

Honey, We're Killing The Kids



take, and amounts of sweets, snacks and fast foods they consume.

If your child is overweight, you shouldn't encourage a strict diet to lose excess weight. Instead you should help them maintain their weight, so they can 'grow into it' as they become taller.

The best way to do this is to make long-term improvements to your child's diet and eating habits, while increasing the amount of physical activity they do.

Your child should never be put on a weight-loss diet without medical advice as this can affect their growth. You should talk to your GP or a nutritionist if you're very concerned about your child's weight.

Try to eat sensibly yourself to set an example. The good news is it's probably easier to change a child's eating habits than an adults, even if it seems like a battlefield. Children will become addicted to what they are allowed to eat, and eat what they are addicted to. ■

Obesity is the state of being seriously overweight – to a degree that affects your health. Obesity in childhood is linked to many health complications and tends to indicate the child will be obese as an adult. Childhood obesity is increasing in the western world at an alarming rate.

In the UK, about 27 per cent of children are now overweight and research suggests the main problem is a continual reduction in the amount of exercise they

Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

I would like to donate: £ _____

Cheque payable to Matt's Canaan Trust

Mastercard / Visa / Switch / Delta

Card No: _____

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Issue Date (Switch): _____

Expiry Date: _____

Last 3 digits on back of card: _____

Issue No (Switch): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Helpful

- Wholegrain bread, pastas, rice, and potatoes in their jackets.
- Grilled or steamed foods: Burgers, fish fingers and sausages are just as tasty when grilled and have less fat. If you can't resist, oven chips are better than fried.
- Lots of water, some fresh juices diluted with water
- Wholegrain cereal with no added sugar. Read labels.
- 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day
- Regular eating patterns and times. Make meals an event not a rushed moment.
- Listen to your tummy – eat when you are really hungry – and not just thirsty.
- Eat more slowly – see how many times you can chew a mouthful of food. This gives your tummy great expectations and a better chance of digesting nutrients properly.
- Stop eating when you feel full
- Involve children in food preparation
- 60 minutes of exercise each day (4 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls don't achieve this.)

- Walking to the shops and school whenever possible
- Family bike rides and swim outings, football, cricket, rounders, frisbee.
- Girl Guides and Boy Scouts
- Dancing and skipping, and rebounding on a mini trampoline
- Give hugs, cinema trips and sleep overs as rewards

Harmful

- High fat and sugary foods such as chocolate, biscuits, cakes, crisps, chips, ice cream and doughnuts.
- Fizzy drinks that are high in sugar: Coca Cola, Sprite, Lemonade. Avoid diet drinks too as they contain countless harmful chemicals.
- Takeaways
- Grazing (eating throughout the day)
- Eating while watching TV or on the computer
- More than 2 hours of TV and computer games each day
- Giving food as a reward or treat
- Food as a form of comfort