

Cycle of Life

300 Miles for Reecie



Lealands
High School

The **BRAIN
TUMOUR
CHARITY**

In March 2016, 13 year old Charlie Nelson, will be attempting to take on a 300 mile bike ride, to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity. His efforts are all in memory of his little brother Reece, who sadly passed away in September 2012 from a brain tumour.

Reece was a unique little boy, who adored life and had an infectious personality which only drew people close to him. He is so badly missed by everyone, every minute of every day. The fund was set up not only to continue Reece's memory but in the hope that one day a cure can be found so that no other family has to experience the loss of life's most precious gift.

The bike ride will start and finish at Addenbrookes Hospital, in Cambridge, where Reece spent time being treated during his illness. The event will take place over the Easter holidays and is proposed to take 10 days meaning he will have to cycle 30 miles a day!

Charlie and his family are currently busy planning, promoting and looking for sponsorship, with all the money raised going to Reece's fund. Any help, support and promotion for the event would be gratefully received. This fundraising attempt is another in a long line of charity events Charlie has embarked upon over the last year.

Charlie's Story So Far....

In March 2014, Lealands High School student, Charlie Nelson, and his family approached headteacher, Mr John Burridge, to ask if the school could support Charlie with his fundraising efforts.

The school got behind Charlie and offered to come up with fundraising ideas and then help and support Charlie in every way possible to reach his targets.

The first step for Charlie was to tell his story to the students and staff, to make them aware of his situation. In July 2014, Charlie enlisted the help of his friends from the Year 7 football team and some Year 11 students and produced a promotional video about his reasons for raising money and requesting support. The video was shown to students and staff during assemblies and was so touching that there were very few dry eyes by the end of it.

Later that month, Lealands held their annual Community Fun Day. Money raised on the day was split between a number of local charities including; Reece's charity and Keech Cottage children's hospice. There were stalls and activities filling the school field including, bouncy castles, various food options with a BBQ, ice cream and lots of sweets to be munched; cheerleading and dance performances and a huge 5 a side football tournament. Charlie ran his own stall, with a penalty shootout game, a guess the sweets in the jar game and loom bands for sale. Overall, a total of £2391.39 was raised on the day, with the £245 raised on Charlie's stall going to Reece's charity and £939.48 to Keech.

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On 17th July, with the help of Lealands' Community Development Manager, Mr Phil Payne, and other members of staff, Charlie got together with the Lealands Year 7 football team once again. They embarked on a 23 mile sponsored walk round Grafham Water in Cambridgeshire. The walk was spread over two days, with an overnight stay at nearby campsite, Top End Farm. It proved to be extremely gruelling for the boys with many of them suffering bad blisters and exhaustion. However, their hard work and perseverance paid off, as they managed to raise a massive £2093.82 for The Brain Tumour Charity. Although the experience was tough for Charlie and his friends, it didn't put him off wanting to do more.

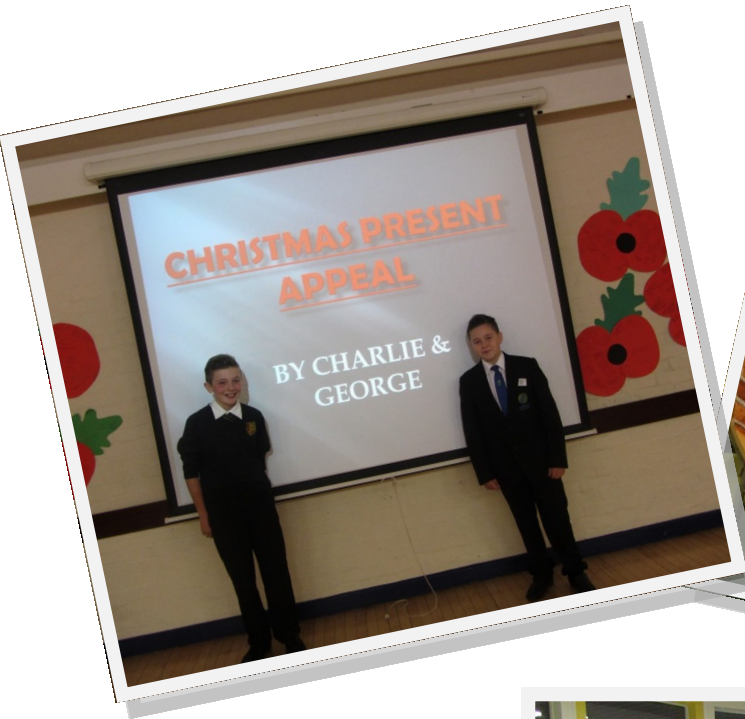
In September, Charlie was back in a meeting with Mr Burrige about his next venture. He had come up with an idea for a Christmas toy appeal. Toys, games, sweets and chocolates would be collected and donated to Addenbrookes Hospital and Keech Cottage. With the help of Assistant Headteacher, Miss Angie Bews; Charlie asked for staff and students at Lealands to donate any unwanted sweets, chocolate, toys and games. In conjunction with this, the school launched a Christmas Hamper competition where they asked for non-perishable foods to be donated which could be given to the Luton Food Bank.

In November, Charlie spread the word of his appeal to a wider audience by presenting his own assembly to Alameda Middle School in Ampthill, where his best friend George attends, to try to recruit more help.

There was an absolutely overwhelming response to the appeal with every tutor group in the school designing and creating their own hampers and filling them with goodies. There were so many donations that they managed to completely fill one of the meeting rooms at the school and there was only just enough room on the mini bus when it came to delivering them.

Even with all this going on, Charlie still had the time to attend the annual Luton's Best Awards in November at Luton Hoo. He had deservedly been nominated for the Child of Courage award following all his excellent charity work. On the night, to his surprise, Charlie not only won the award in his category, but was also voted for the People's Choice award. On receiving the awards he said, "I can't believe I won two awards. I didn't think I would get another after winning the first. When my name was read out I thought it was someone else with a similar name to mine!" Everyone associated with Lealands High School were immensely proud of Charlie and pleased for him to receive the recognition he fully deserved.

On the night of the event, a generous benefactor, who had heard of Charlie's toy appeal, donated a £250 Entertainer voucher to him. Charlie spent the voucher on toys and games to add to all the other donations.



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In December, it was time to deliver all the items collected during the Toy Appeal and Christmas Hamper competition. With the help of two students from the winning tutor group, Charlie, Mr Payne and Miss Bews filled the school minibus and visited Keech Cottage to deliver all the sweets, chocolates and toys. On arrival, they were greeted with a tour of the premises so they could see where their donations would be going to. It was then time to take all the food donations to the Luton Food Bank.

During the Christmas holidays, Charlie, his best friend George and his family took more donations to Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge. It was a very emotional return for Charlie and his family due to the nature of their last visits, however, due to the worthwhile occasion, they were able to overcome their personal feelings.

It took 8 helpers to carry all the bags and trollies filled with presents to the playroom, where the children on the ward, who were well enough, could come and choose a present. Charlie said, "It was great to see the joy on the children's faces and it gave me a good feeling giving the toys and making their day just a little better".

For the children who were not well enough, Charlie and George took a trolley to all the bays on the ward so they were still able to pick something without having to get up.

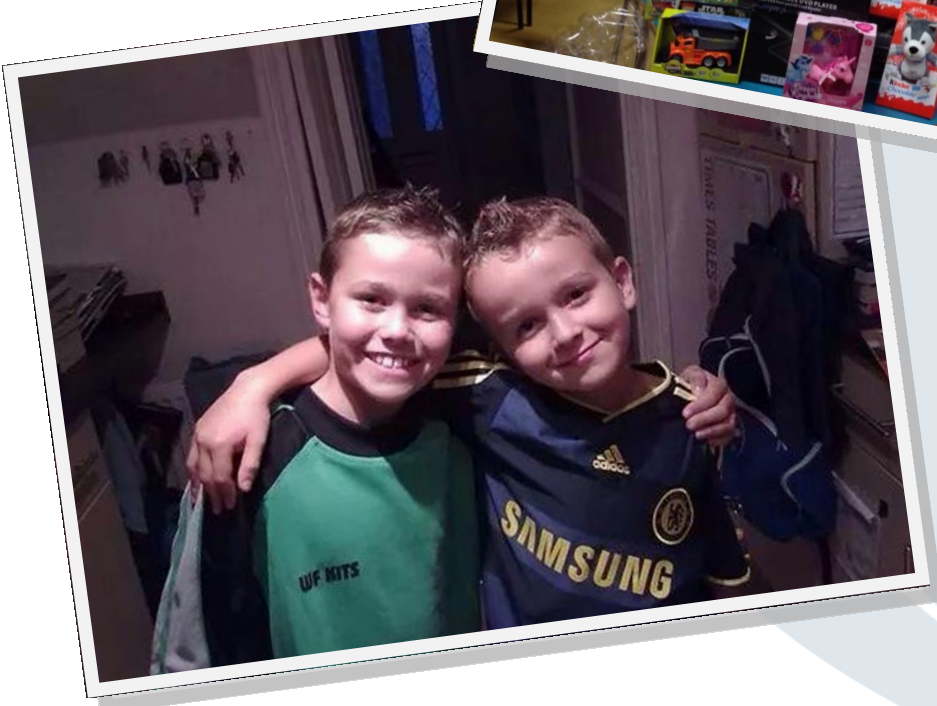
Once the last of the donations had been delivered, Charlie said, "I could not be happier with how it went and would like to say a huge thank you to everyone that donated to this wonderful cause".

Charlie's hard work has not only been recognised locally, but also by his favourite football team -Chelsea Football Club. On Tuesday 20th January 2015, he was invited to be a mascot for the team during their televised Capital One Cup semi-final match against Liverpool at Anfield. Unfortunately, just before the event, Charlie broke his elbow, however, yet again, adversity did not stop him from attending the once in a lifetime event. He got the opportunity to walk out on the pitch with Chelsea captain, John Terry, and stand with the teams whilst the media took photos. He was also invited to go into the away dressing room and meet the Chelsea players and get their autographs. He said, "It felt amazing to be part of such a great atmosphere; I didn't mind that the match ended in a draw because I had such a memorable experience".

Lealands' headteacher Mr John Burrridge said, "We are all extremely proud of Charlie and the remarkable work he has done over the past year. We are currently finalising the details with him about his 300 mile bike ride and will be giving him all the help and support he needs to fulfil his ambitions. Despite what Charlie has had to go through over the past couple of years, he is flourishing here at Lealands High School and currently has some of the highest Mensa scores in the country".



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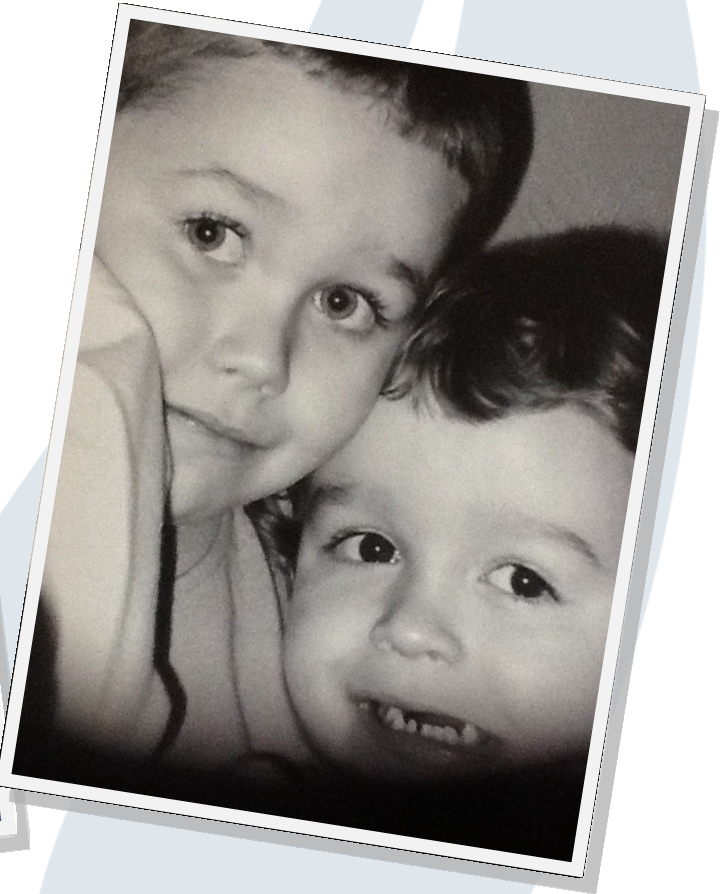
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The

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For more information on how you can get involved, please contact
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For more information about Reece's story, please visit:

<http://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/supporter-groups/reecie-nelsons-superstars-fund>