UK Transplant Kids Jet Off To Switzerland

Friday, 13 March 2009

It's Snow Wonderful! UK Transplant Kids Jet Off To Switzerland For Special International Transplant Ski Camp. On Saturday 14th March, 17 lucky transplant children aged 8-17 years are heading off to the mountains of Switzerland to enjoying a week of ski and snow fun at the TACKERS International Ski Camp, with other children who have received new organs from across the globe.

The annual TACKERS International Ski Camp is being held from 14th-21st March 2009 in the snowy village of Anzere. The camp offers the opportunity for these youngsters to celebrate their second chance of life and show the general public just how fit and well they are after their life saving surgery, highlighting the importance of organ donation. The UK Contingent is 80 strong this year with parents, siblings and also a UK medical nursing team to assist with the care of the 50 international children attending from across the World.

Liz Schick, Founder of TACKERS, is herself a liver transplant recipient. Inspired by her own experiences, Liz developed the TACKERS Adventure Ski Camp from scratch as a charity adventure camp for children with organ transplants and this will be her ninth International Camp as Project Manager for TACKERS. Liz makes a huge difference to the lives of transplant children across the World. For many of the children, this will be the very first time they've had the opportunity to run, play and most importantly 'have fun' as a normal child. It also gives them the chance to slip the often over-protective arms of their parents and escape their struggle for long-term good health for a week of fun! For many, it will also be the first time they have met other children with transplants like them!

Liz comments "I used to believe that you have a transplant and you're cured. I now realize that it is only the start of a lifelong battle to remain fit and well with a daily medication cocktail to keep the organ healthy. Children face the toughest battle. With a shortage of organs, it is critical that those youngsters who receive a transplant keep their new organs for life and continue to enjoy living. We sincerely thank our sponsors, for without their financial support, TACKERS would not happen for these amazing children and their families".

Carol Olley, Project Manager for the Transplant Sport UK children's project 'Transplant Active' says, "All of these children have experienced near death situations and long periods of illness. Without the 'Gift of Life' they simply would not be here today! They have already climbed a mountain in their quest for life and with their courage and determination; they will enjoy the thrills of skiing down a mountain in Switzerland. Life is very precious and as there is a desperate shortage of organs nationally, we do hope that seeing these amazing youngsters will encourage people to talk to their families about organ donation and sign the NHS Organ Donor Register.'

The UK kids will be taking part in ski and snowboarding competitions and making new friends with children from over 12 other countries, including; New Zealand, Australia, Morocco, Israel, Croatia, Hungary, France and Ireland. The Transplant Sport UK organisers would sincerely like to thank The Astellas Foundation for their amazing financial support for the UK children and TACKERS.

UK Tackers 2009 Participants

Molly Pinnock-aged 8 yrs old- Enfield, Middlesex - Molly had a liver transplant at the age of 15 months old at Kings College Hospital in London. Saturday is a special day for Molly as she celebrates her birthday. Molly is looking forward to meeting other children with transplants as she has never ever met anyone else with a transplant and she thinks she is the only one! Mollys story highlights the benefits of bringing these children together so they can share their experiences and realise they are not alone. Travelling with Mum Sharon. Mums partner Mark and brother Alfie for a winter adventure.

Poppy Gamble - aged 12 years from Isle of Wight. Poppy had a liver transplant at Kings College hospital in London at the age of 13 months. She has endured many additional problems and has a complicated medical history so a ski trip is really a dream come true for this amazing little girl. She can't wait to get out and about on the slopes! Poppy will be travelling to Switzerland with her Dad Bradley and her sister Ellie May. The Gamble family have just moved to IOW from Dulwich London in the past few weeks to enjoy the pace of Island Life.

Gareth Pons - 16yrs old, Chard, Somerset. Gareth suffered from life threatening kidney disease at received a new kidney aged 10 years old at Bristol Childrens hospital. Sadly, this transplant failed and after 5 years of haemodialysis, Gareth received a second transplant at Christmas 2007. This is Gareths first trip with Transplant Active and he is excited to meet other teens. Travelling with Mum and Dad Donna and Garry and brothers Ryan and Marcos.

Matthew Barton - aged 16 years old, Chippenham, Wiltshire. Matthew received a new kidney at Bristol Children's hospital aged 3 years old. A fit and healthy young man, he is attending TACKERS for the first time with his Mum Lynne and siblings Robert and Lucy. Matthew is a regular participant at The British Transplant Games and he is hoping to make friends with teens his own age, gai some independence at Ski Camp and enjoy a fantastic experience with others who know exactly how he feels.

Jade Carr-15 years old - Runcorn in Cheshire-Jade had a heart transplant over 12 years ago and is representing the UK at the World Transplant Games in Australia in August 2009. This is Jades second visit to TACKERS and she will be using her experience to mentor new transplant children learning about the transplant lifestyle. Jade is a mature and amazing young lady, who admirably devotes much of her time to promotion of organ donation to help save the lives of others. She is travelling with her Mum and Dad Lynne and Rob, but looking forward to some 'independent time' at the Ski Camp.

Delise Casserino-aged 14 yrs from Whalley Range, Manchester. Delise is a lucky young lady with a very special mum! In 2003, she received the Gift Of Life from her Mum Romina who was a living related donor. After

receiving her Mums kidney, Delise's life changed dramatically and she has lived life to the full ever since. Romina and Delise's amazing and emotional story was recorded in a BBC Documentary 'One Live' and told their incredible story. Delise is no stranger to TACKERS and this is her 5th TACKERS! She attends the Camp to help other children as she speaks fluent Italian as does Mum Romina who is an official TACKERS Volunteer.

Andrew Boyle - aged 10 years old - Widnes, Cheshire. Andrew received a new kidney at Alder Hey in Liverpool in February 2008. He is very very excited to be attending the ski camp along with him Mum and Dad Nicola and Christopher and brother and sister Gabrielle and Christopher. Parents Nicola and Christopher are looking forward to meeting parents who have similar experiences as this is their first Transplant Active trip as part of the new Alder Hey Children's Transplant Sports Team.

Emma Pease - aged 12 yrs from Barnoldswick, Lancashire. Emma received a new liver at St James Hospital in Leeds in 2006 aged 9 years old. She is looking forward to meeting new friends and also spending time learning to ski as this is her very first time. Emma has also taken part in the British transplant Games and is a keen horserider. She recently swam with dolphins in Florida. Emma is travelling to TACKERS with her Mum Carline and Dad Andrew and they are all very excited.

Charlie Nash, aged 9 yrs old, Southsea, Hants. Charlie is a little girl with a huge personality! She received a new heart at Great Ormond Street hospital at the age of 6 years old due to a difficult congenital heart condition. Her quality of life improved drastically and Charlie is now learning to cope with her newfound energy and can't wait to get onto the ski slopes. A plucky young lady, attending TACKERS with her Mum Lorraine, Mums partner Mark and sister Amy.

Luci Eggleton, aged 13 years from Maresfield, East Sussex. Luci and her family are to enjoy their very first taste of Transplant Active membership with this special trip to TACKERS Ski Camp. Luci received a new kidney in November 2007 at Evelina Children's Hospital in London and is looking forward to meeting other teens who have also had transplants. She is attending TACKERS with Mum and Dad Anna and Michael and also siblings Florence and Alice.

Rebecca Long - aged 15 years - Chester-le-Street, Co Durham. Rebecca has an amazing story- She received a new hear at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle aged 4 years old following a virus - cardio myopathy and she first attended Tackers in 2002 at the age of 8 years old. She was due to attend Ski Camp again in 2003 however one week prior to the camp, she had an unexpected stroke which affected her left side. Determined to beat the odds, she fought back, despite being told she would never ski again, to attend a ski camp in Poland in 2004. Sadly Rebecca's health deteriorated and despite a pacemaker and additional medication, her heart failed and she was re listed for a second heart in November 2006. Christmas 2006 was bleak for her family as she was desperately clinging onto life. Whilst the UK group were at TACKERS Ski camp in January 2007, we heard the amazing news that Rebecca had successfully received a second heart and within 6 months, she was once again a member of her beloved Freeman Children's Transplant Team.

TACKERS Project Manager Liz Schick has especially invited Rebecca back to TACKERS to celebrate her third chance of life in style on the snowy peaks of Anzere. Rebecca is being very brave and travelling without her parents for an independent adventure, in the care of the UK Group Leader. What an achievement!

Mason Haley - aged 12 years - Cleatormoor, Cumbria. Mason is the UK's only Bone Marrow participant at TACKERS this year. He received a Bone Marrow transplant in Newcastle in 2003 after suffering from Cancer. Mason has just celebrated his 5 year remission and with his family, he has raised many Â£1,000's for children's cancer charities in the North of England. He is an amazing young man and is looking forward to his winter adventures in Anzere with his Mum Maria and brother Conor. Mason's amazing story is to featured in a BBC Documentary series of live shows promoting organ donation during Easter Week, starting on Easter Monday 13th April 2009

Stephen and Rachael Moffat - aged 12yrs and 7 yrs old. Lanarkshire in Scotland. Stephen and Rachael have an incredibly emotional story- Due to a hereditary condition, both children received a new heart at The Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. Stephen received his new heart in December 2007 and Rachael in August 2008. These two amazing children are attending TACKERS Ski Camp to celebrate their new life with Mum Mary.

Euan Flannigan aged 16 yrs from Edinburgh,Scotland. Euan received a new heart at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle in May 2007. He is now a fit and healthy sporty young man who is about to enjoy his very first ski trip at TACKERS. Euan is travelling to Anzere without his parents to enjoy an opportunity to gain some independence and make new friends.

Callum Teasdale - age 13 yrs, Frodsham, Cheshire. This is Callum's first time at the TACKERS Ski Camp and he is looking forward to meeting new friends and having fun. Callum received a new liver at Birmingham Children's hospital in February 1997 aged only 22 months old. A regular attendee at the British Transplant Games, he is also very proud to be representing the UK at The World Transplant Games in Australia in August 2009. Callum is attending Camp with his parents, Adele and Anthony-both nurses, and also his host of siblings under 10 yrs old, Niamh, Evan, Alice and Niall. A true family winter adventure.

Jemilah Malarik - aged 11 yrs old from Lupfig, Switzerland. Jemilah received her new heart at Harefield Hospital in London as a tiny baby. She is very excited to be attending TACKERS for the first time and she currently lives in Switzerland due to her parents employment. She is attending Tackers with Mum Jacqueline and they will be joined later in the week by Dad Paul and brother Delano. Jemilah is a regular member of the Harefield Children's Team and competes regularly at the British Transplant Games. She loves her transplant friends as they have so much to talk about.

Charlie Dyson - aged 21 years from Bradford. UK TACKERS Volunteer. An amazing young man, he attended the very first TACKERS Camp in 2001 as a

child and for several years afterwards as a regular attendee. Charlie received a new kidney in 1994 at the age of 6 years old. Cheeky Charlie was the darling of the Leeds Children's Transplant Team- well known as a practical joker - he was always up to mischief!! However, now as a mature young man of 21yrs, Charlie wants to give back to other children the care, kindness and guidance shown to himself as a child and is attending TACKERS as a volunteer for the second time. His experience of growing up with a transplant will inspire the teenagers of today and we can guarantee there will not be a dull moment with Charlie around!

Janet Coleman - Belfast, Northern Ireland - 45 years old. UK TACKERS Volunteer. Transplant Sport UK adult member Janet Coleman is also attending Tackers. Amazingly Janet received a new kidney in 1984 and is extremely fit and well, over 25 years after her life saving transplant. Janet is an active member of Transplant Sport UK and a regular member of the UK Team at the World Transplant Games as a champion swimmer. She attends Tackers for the first time as we encourage adult recipients to learn about children's experiences and also to act as a shining example to the children of long term transplantation. A former County Level runner, Janet is a regular competitor at the British Transplant Games, representing the Northern Ireland Team and has won a host of medals all over the World. Janet will be a major member of the Local Organising Committee when the British Transplant Games travel to Belfast in 2011. Appearing regularly in Irish Fancy Dress at various TSUK events, she is looking forward to celebrating St Patricks Day 'on the mountain!'

Notes

To register on the NHS Organ Donor Register, please telephone 0845 60 60 400 or go to http://www.uktransplant.org.uk to register online. Most importantly, please discuss your wishes with your family and friends - thank you.

For further information about TACKERS - please go to http://www.tackers.org

For further information on other activities at Transplant Sport UK, please go to http://www.transplantsportuk.org.uk
The 'Transplant Active' Children's programme is an inclusion project funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families.

UK Transplant