

Heartfelt Tribute to an Inspirational young lady -

Charlie WELCH – died 21.6.2012 aged 20yrs



Medway Rotary Club has lost a very dear friend who was the guest of the Club on both the Handicamp Holidays that we ran for 20yrs, but also more recently a guest with her Mum Trish, her Nan Jacqui and brothers Adam (17yrs) and Jacob (10yrs) on the very first Medway Rotary Childrens Hospice Holiday to EuroDisney in 2009.

Although suffering severe disability that required management with a constant cocktail of drugs and special arrangements, Charlie nevertheless always had a smile and was a constant source of inspiration for all of us who had the privilege to know and love her.

Her body may have let her down, but her spirit lives on in the memories of Medway Rotarians inspired to provide 'service above self' as we realised only too well how fortunate we are with our families in comparison with the guest families we have the privilege of hosting on our annual EuroDisney holidays. Charlie was one of the six families to enjoy the first such holiday in 2009 and together with the other guest families made the event as enjoyable for us as it was for them.

Although fundraising for this annual event is a major commitment for the Club (£18,000), the self funding Rotarians who accompany the families are inspired to continue the venture spurred on by the likes of Charlie who is a model of inspiration for all we do.

Although unable to communicate conventionally, Charlie's mischievous spirit and cheeky smile spoke volumes for how she both loved and was loved in return. Charlie's energy was infectious and lit fires in the hearts of thousands in her short but optimistic life. In spite of being aware of her own mortality, she faced the world with a courage that is humbling for us all. It will be with great sadness but huge thanks for her life that we will share in her being laid to rest on 4th July 2012. We won't show our sadness because that's not what Charlie would want – but we'll be joyful that the pain of which she rarely spoke is now behind her.

The gratitude of Charlie and the family for the experience of joining in the Rotary Club of Medway childrens holidays is best expressed by her Mum Trish, who after the inaugural Rotary Childrens Hospice Family Holiday in 2009 wrote:

***Hands were held and hearts were felt,
The merry smiles that make you melt,***

***The dreams you bought that came to life,
Through all our pain, trouble and strife,***

***You're all special people and this much is true,
Forever indebted we are to you***

***When my child passes with a smile on her face,
Be happy as you all put that smile in place.***

Love to all From the Welch Clan xxxxxxx.

If you wish to help the Rotary Club of Medway finance the next Rotary Childrens Hospice Holiday to benefit other families like Charlie's, then please get in touch via this website.

