

In support of the Schools Application for funding from Arrhythmia Alliance for an AED.

My youngest of three daughters, Tilly is a pupil at Hawarden Village Church School, and I'm extremely passionate about the school's application for funding towards an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) as this is vital piece of first aid equipment which needs to be available in as many locations as possible.

I'm also one of three daughters, however I recently lost my youngest sister Joanne, aged 35 years & 35 days on St Davids Day 2015 to a sudden cardiac arrest.

My sisters tragic death was sudden and unexpected, and despite the very best efforts of her husband, (himself a trained first aider / trained in the use AED's in his Workplace) CPR alone for Joanne maintained cardiac output until emergency services arrived, but it wasn't enough to save her life as she had needed urgent therapy from a defibrillator to restore her normal heartbeat. Ambulance response times are varied and under pressure and although they did their best, she could not be saved.

Joanne was a beautiful young lady with two gorgeous children and a loving husband. She had everything to live for, and is sorely missed by the entire family. There is a history of SVT in our family, but there was never any indication of how serious the condition was until that day.

Joanne was herself once an ambassador for Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospitals 'Red Dress' fundraising campaign, and over the years had raised money for other charities too. She was such a caring and giving person who always had something positive to say. I've enclosed a copy of a newspaper article highlighting the Red Dress Campaign, in which there is a picture of Joanne with her son Harrison when he was a similar age to Tilly. She also did a follow on article with her daughter Jessica.

As a family, we need the peace of mind that an AED is on hand should any of our children suffer a cardiac arrest, as there is a family history. But having an AED would also benefit the school and the wider community, because often there are no prior warning signals of a cardiac arrest, and it's estimated between 12-16 young people a week under the age of 35 are passing away to sudden arrhythmic death syndrome.

Without urgent therapy in a timely manner, survival chances are estimated to be as low as 2% for an out of hospital event like this. With therapy delivered by an AED, the chances of survival out of hospital increase dramatically, which is why it's so important that AED's are available in as many public settings as possible, in particular Tilly's school. Not only for the protection of Tilly, but also the school have a total of 457 pupils and 50 staff, protection for them too. At peak times, Mrs Bartlett headteacher of Hawarden Village Church School estimates there are in the region of 250 parents / grandparents.

I truly hope Hawarden Village Church School's request for funding towards an AED is a successful application, in memory of my little sister Joanne. Following a recent fundraising non uniform day, the school have successfully raised £400 towards the cost.

Kind regards
Zoe Rimmer

is from the heart

Joanne's fight for the truth of her condition



With her beautiful son, a wedding in the planning and a honeymoon on the horizon, it's hard to believe Joanne spent her time through her various heart conditions that the 30-year-old now views as a blessing to be thankful to Liverpool's Liverpool Heart Foundation - and to Harrison's Red Cross charity.

"I've never wanted to overcome the condition, it's been like I have been given a second chance," she says.

The problems started at the age of 17 when she began having heart palpitations.

Joanne, a hairdresser, continued having palpitations until she was 20 and her father was diagnosed with a heart and liver condition - essential hypertension.

"My doctor even told there was nothing wrong with my heart and maybe it'd be down to stress."

Thanks to the help of Dr Joanne, who then at 24 was diagnosed as having long QT syndrome (LQTS), which causes an abnormally long heart rate.

"My condition was getting worse and keeping me in hospital with my work."

"I was eventually taking time off and my efforts were decreasing more and more."

Joanne and her father Harry started to start a family but her doctor told her any pregnancy would be high risk because of the LQTS.

"They made me sign documents that said to bear the consequences of my condition," said Joanne.

Joanne was referred to Liverpool's Cardiac Centre where she was told that all part of the heart was affected. Fortunately she suffered from heart pain a short period in the heart's electrical system. The solution was simple - "bypass it out."

"I had only been on the waiting list for six months when I got diagnosed. With a lot of discussion with the doctors, we decided to proceed with the operation. We came to a decision - I'd agreed to have an operation to see the progress of my heart - could give me a second chance to try."

On the 16 May 2006, after being in a waiting list, Joanne.

When the two slight incisions were repaired, hospital appointments for cardiac through but the operation had not a success - as a heart was implanted. But while in the waiting list Joanne had a momentary episode and gave birth to a girl. Joanne said it was a bit and that she had just found there when Joanne finally had her second operation.

"I was a success and now, for the first time in my life, Joanne doesn't have to worry about heart palpitations."

She is thanking The Red Cross Liverpool in Liverpool, Red Cross conditions can happen in women of all ages.

"By supporting the campaign I hope I can give something back to the charity who gave me back my life."

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Joanne and Harrison's Article