



Going For Gold - £300,000 Fundraising Target

Team LIBRA is delighted to announce that we are close to reaching 50% the £300,000 target for our Going for Gold Campaign in aid of the amazing Haematology Department at King's College Hospital in London.

This is a huge achievement, especially given the challenges of Covid-19, and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed. Here we look back on the last 12 months:

Despite lockdowns and restrictions on fundraising activities, we have raised an incredible £38,000 over the past year thanks to the dedication of our fantastic supporters.

According to our Treasurer Rob Pullinger, legacy giving and gifts in memory have proved some of the most popular ways to provide support throughout lockdown, raising more than £24,500!

LIBRA Trustees moved all meetings and fundraising activities online, while creating a fundraising pack to help provide inspiration when it comes to hosting virtual events.

While Covid-19 has impacted on LIBRA this year, we continue to put all of our efforts into raising vital funds for the Haematology Department at King's so that new and improved treatments for blood cancers and blood disorders continue to be created.

Our Going for Gold Campaign is supported by Dame Kelly Holmes MBE who sadly lost her own mother to myeloma and she said: "You can do amazing things to help raise funds for LIBRA including garden parties, sponsored runs, walks, abseils, parachute jumps and so much more. Come on and take up the challenge and help to save more lives!"

If you would like to find out more about LIBRA and the ways you can get involved please visit libralionscharity.org



East Grinstead 10k



Are you looking for a fun challenge? East Grinstead Lions Club are encouraging you to sign up for this year's East Grinstead 10K Run (EG10k), also known as The Andy Ripley Memorial Race, on Sunday 26th September 2021.

Organised and supported by volunteers from the East Grinstead Triathlon Club and the East Grinstead Athletics Club, the special event is expected to attract 300-400 runners.

The EG10k is a community event organised "for runners, by runners" with all proceeds going to East Grinstead Lions and Prostate Cancer UK. This year East Grinstead Lions are generously donating their funds raised to LIBRA!

Lion David Sluys is taking part and commented: "As the Lions South East District Childhood Cancer officer, I'm delighted to be taking part in The East Grinstead 10K to help raise vital funds for LIBRA. I'm hoping to help sign up a large group of runners to take part with me on the day.

"During the last nine years the race has raised over £18,000 for good causes so we hope to raise as much as possible for LIBRA, ensuring new and improved treatments for blood cancers and blood disorders can be created."

The EG10k was rated the UK's 'Best Race for Beginners' in Runner's World in 2013.

The race covers a scenic and undulating multi-terrain route, with the first 7km off-road on well-surfaced bridleways and the final 3km on residential roads.

The route is well marshalled and has a water station at 5km. It really is suitable for runners of all abilities, but if you are looking for a personal best, you will be chasing the 2017 course record of 33:25 minutes!

Trustee Glyn Upjohn said: "This is one of the first major group fundraising events of the year for LIBRA following the easing of lockdown restrictions. We are so grateful to East Grinstead Lions Club for choosing to support us and all funds raised will go to our Going for Gold campaign."

Race entry is just £17 and organisers provide: chip timing, medical service, toilets, parking, on site motivation from Meridian FM and finish line catering by East Grinstead Lions!

Each runner will receive a sustainably-sourced medal included in the entry price, plus category and spot prizes!

If you would like to take part in this exciting event as individual or in a group, please call David on 07712 224446 to register your interest.

The Power Of Nutrition



Jess Pholenz-Saw is a specialist critical care dietician at King's and her role is vital when it comes to patient care. We met with Jess to find out more about her role and why she became a dietician.

"The most important part of my role is advocating for nutrition in our critically ill patients. It's really important for each patient to have their own nutrition plan.

"During the Covid-19 surges, we had a team of seven dietitians helping to support our patients. I am also involved in education, research, and service improvement.

"I became a dietitian because I knew I always wanted to work in a health care profession. When a close family member fell ill, the importance and power of nutrition were highlighted to me. Together with my love for food, people nutrition, and dietetics - it seemed like the perfect fit.

"I believe that we need to increase the profile of our profession and celebrate all the great work dietitians do. Dietitians work in nearly all areas of health care and play a vital role in patient care.

"It's important to raise awareness as the vital role dietitians play is often overlooked. Nutrition plays such an important part in life, while sick and when well. Increasing the awareness of our profession will subsequently benefit our patients.

"The Nutrition and Dietetics Department at King's, service a wide range of specialist areas for example critical care, haematology and oncology. Our service covers inpatients, outpatients, adults, paediatrics and neonates.

"For someone who's considering a career in dietetics, I'd say it is a very diverse profession."

Gifts That Make a Real Difference



LIBRA works closely with a team of leading haematology professors at King's and we support the creation of lifesaving treatments for patients with blood cancers and blood disorders such as leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and sickle cell disease.

Over the last year some of the most powerful ways supporters have joined LIBRA in the fight against these disorders is by donating gifts in memory of loved ones or by leaving a gift in their Will.

LIBRA Treasurer Rob Pullinger said: "Families of haematology patients who have experienced the amazing care at King's often decide to set up tribute funds for LIBRA.

"We appreciate it is an emotional time for families and we do everything we can to assist. The funds raised through memory giving help to ensure the creation of new and improved treatments can continue.

"Legacy giving is another option. Once they have provided for loved ones, some of our supporters like to create a lasting legacy by leaving a gift in their Will that will go on to benefit generations to come. This is always very touching and we ensure everything is handled in a caring manner."

Please contact us to find out more about tribute funds and legacy giving via email to info@libralionscharity.org



George and his wife Mary, from Gravesend in Kent, were thousands of miles apart when they first discovered that he was suffering with AML. Their story takes us from Kerala in India and back to the UK where the world renowned haematology team at King's arranged a lifesaving stem cell transplant. Here George, aged 56, shares his incredible story:

I first realised that I was unwell during a stay in Kerala with my parents when I suddenly blacked out in May 2020 and was taken to hospital where tests revealed my blood count was low. I checked with my family doctor in a speciality hospital in Cochin where further tests confirmed a variation in blood count. The doctor referred me to the Amritha Institute of Medical Sciences where blood and bone marrow tests were conducted and I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML).

There were no signs or symptoms at all other than that one black out and I was healthy and active. Being diagnosed in India was tough as my wife and daughters were all in the UK. Covid-19 was spreading through India and due to lockdown I was unable to return in March 2020 as planned.

It was difficult to share the details with family initially, but my faith kept me strong. My family gave me encouragement, support, and confidence to face the challenge while in India until I landed back in the UK with a smile and positivity.

I was offered treatment in India, but I decided to only have some initial transfusions in the hope I

would be able to return to the UK for chemotherapy and more extensive treatments. My wife Mary and our friends were amazing, and they managed to make arrangements for me to travel back to the UK in June.

Darenth Valley hospital in Kent admitted me on arrival. Later that month they began treating me with chemo for AML and it wasn't until November that I was referred to King's for a bone marrow transplant.

In the mist of Covid-19, my brothers were not able to do the tests, send out for the donor match to Kerala, as all centres were closed. Even though they would have been a match, travel was impossible during lockdown. However, a miracle occurred and a donor was identified with a 9/10 match in the UK and we are so grateful to him/her for their kindness.

The stem cell transplant in December 2020 has given me new life to move forward with day-to-day activities. There are many challenges and I am slow and tired compared to how I used to be and I am currently unable to work, but I am positive and undergoing physio at King's. Each day is a great blessing for me, and to have Mary, our daughters, friends and family close is priceless. We hold on to this saying 'and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.'

The level of personal care provided by King's for my family and I has been amazing. Our special thanks to Dr Victoria Potter who always took time to listen patiently, investigate, advise, and clear doubts and concerns ahead of my bone marrow transplant. I would also like to thank the haematology team and all of the staff who are involved in my care.

I do feel we need to arrange awareness of blood disorders. For instance, in my case there were no symptoms at all. I feel people try to find details online when hearing the word leukaemia or AML and end up with more fear which in turn makes them lose hope. That is why it is essential to gain expert advice from health care professionals and through charities like LIBRA who are helping to make a positive difference.