

PRESS RELEASE

Bedford High Girls Scale Three Peaks and raise over £3,500 for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity

Five 14 year olds from Bedford High School are feeling very proud of themselves as last week (29 and 30 June) they successfully completed the Three Peaks Challenge, to raise much needed funds for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity.

The girls, Hannah Selvey, Robyn Armstrong, Amber Stewart, Harry Lusty and Lydia Watt all successfully completed the challenge, which included sleet and snow at the top of Ben Nevis, a scree scramble climbing up a 150 metre slope on their hands and knees on Scafell Pike and running down the last three miles of Snowdon.

With completion times ranging from 21 hours 7 minutes to 22 hours 31 minutes, the girls and their support team were delighted with their 48 hour epic adventure. As Amber Stewart says, 'It was a once in a lifetime experience and I am so glad that we did it.'

The group of friends decided to take on the Three Peak Challenge and raise money for Sands following the tragic death of Robyn's cousin, Summer, who died when her aunt was 7 months pregnant with twins. Robyn's aunt, Candida Evans, received such support from Sands that Robyn and her friends decided to raise much needed funds for the charity that supports bereaved parents across the country and funds research in to why 17 babies die every day in the UK, (11 of which are stillbirths and 6 are babies that die shortly after birth).

Robyn says of the experience, 'When we got to Snowdon we knew it was our last mountain and we were determined to give it our all.'

'We would all like to say a massive thank you to everybody who helped us raise money for Sands and for all the great support everyone gave us before, during and after the challenge. Currently we've raised £3,500 but sponsorship is still coming in and we're hoping the final figure will stand at over £4,000.'

ENDS

For further information, please contact:

Lyn Peters – 01394 385865

or

Lisa Wardle – 07554 454309

Key Information about Sands:

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was established by bereaved parents in 1978 and obtained charity status in 1981.

Sands core aims are to:

- Support anyone affected by the death of a baby;
- To work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and
- To promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives

Helpline: 020 7436 5881

Office: 020 7436 7940

Web: www.uk-sands.org

E mail: info@uk-sands.org

Sands Why 17? campaign:

Sands Why17? campaign asks a simple question. Why in spite of medical advances, do 17 babies die every day in the UK? For some of these deaths we simply do not yet know enough to be able to say why. Further research is needed.

The Facts today:

- 17 babies die every day in the UK (11 are stillbirths, 6 are neonatal deaths) totalling almost 6,500 baby deaths a year - the equivalent of 16 jumbo jets crashing every year with no survivors.
- This is four times the number of people who die every year of MRSA (1,593 MRSA deaths in 2007, UK Statistics Authority).
- This is double the number of adults who lose their lives on Britain's roads every year (2007 – 2,940 people were killed on the roads, Department of Transport).

- Ten times more babies are stillborn than die of cot death every year in the UK.
- The stillbirth rate has remained almost unchanged in the UK for the past 10 years.
(CEMACH)
- Stillbirth is when a baby is born dead after 24 completed weeks of a pregnancy
- Neonatal death is when a baby is born alive but dies within the first 28 days of life

But increasingly, Sands believes that many of these deaths are potentially avoidable. The devastating impact of the death of a baby on the parents and their families and friends could be prevented.

What is needed is better antenatal care, increased funding for maternity services, more midwives and increased funding for research.

Sands Why17? campaign is seeking to raise £3million over the next 5 years to;

1. Focus public awareness on why, tragically, 17 babies a day in the UK are stillborn or die within the first twenty eight days of life;
2. Promote changes in antenatal practice that could prevent babies from dying;
3. Identify and support key research which could provide further information on why so many babies are dying