

Northwich



R.U.F.C.

JOHN BLOWER TRUST

PRESS RELEASE 25/01/04



The picture above tells its own story of how John Blower, aged 44 years of age, is still recovering at the specialist Spinal Injuries Unit at Southport General Hospital from the freak rugby injury sustained at the beginning of December last year whilst playing for Northwich RUFC at Warrington.

John's medical team has confirmed the long-term prognosis that he is now permanently paralysed from the shoulders downwards. As a result of this injury the John Blower Trust was launched at the beginning of January this year. The chairperson of the Trust, Andy Naylor stated: -

"John's injury is tragic. In an instant his life has changed. Instead of John caring for his wife and three children, they now have to care for him. To help the family, the Trust has set a target of £150k to raise within a year, To date, £5k has already been collected, through generous public donations, and this month has seen local businesses pledge a further £2k."



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Andy continued: -

"John's life has changed for ever. He will need constant care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The cost of this care will be significant and I am advised that John could have to personally contribute a minimum of £30k per year to the overall cost. The Trust has been set up to help John over the long term. I accept that we have an uphill struggle and that we have to maximise our efforts before the next local tragedy occurs, but rest assured the trust members are committed to helping John. After all it is John that is providing the inspiration for us to succeed."

Despite his injury John still remains positive

" It is the genuine letters of support that John receives from the public of Northwich, even from people he doesn't know, that keep the demons of depression away for both of us. The generosity and help of the



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Northwich community shown to John and my family is just outstanding. It's terrific, I just can't thank everyone enough."

The picture above shows Julie, John's wife by his bedside. Julie stated: -

" I can't wait for the traction cage to be removed from John, it's only then that I will be able to hold him in my arms. John's knows that we all love him but it is difficult trying to show him affection whilst he is in the traction cage".

The Southport Medical Team has told John that he will have to wear the traction cage that supports his neck for another five weeks. Hopefully after this period they will be able to start an extensive program of rehabilitation suited to his level of disability. The great news is that John now looks to be free and completely independent of the respirator that helped keep him alive when he first sustained his injury. John stated: -

"I know that I am on a long journey to some type of recovery, I don't really know what the future holds but I know that I will not be able to hug and hold the people who are close to me. I am focused on the future and I will make my life the best I can. I owe this to my family, friends and to the people of Northwich who have shown me that I am not alone".

John who has recently been able to sit in a special wheel chair said,

"Moving from the hospital bed to a wheel chair has been a big step for me, but for the first time I could see my hands by my side and I was unable to move them. This moment brought home to me how in some way my head is now detached from my body. It's certainly a life changing experience, and one that I have to accept and move on"



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It has been confirmed that as a result of his injuries John will have to give up his job as Plant Controller at ILFORD Imaging UK Limited, and move from his home in Winnington.

Ian Blower, John's younger brother stated,

"Our parents are struggling to come to terms with the long term impact of John's injury. Unfortunately his home is not compatible with his level of disability; obviously moving home will incur a significant financial outlay. John and Julie are adamant and determined to remain in the Northwich area, it's just a question of finding the right property that will allow John to live with the dignity, independence and pride he deserves".

Andy Naylor the Trust chairperson stated that the local businesses of Northwich have already shown considerable support. Barclays Bank has pledged a substantial donation to the Trust and hopefully the other big banks within Northwich will follow suit. Local businesses have come forward to offer their services for free. The construction Contractors 'Hankinsons of Cheshire Ltd' have offered to act as consultants in any potential project to build a purpose built home for John and his family. The legal firm Moss & Haselhurst are acting as the Trust legal representative, to ensure that the Trust has the best advice possible in making the Trust business fully transparent.

Simon Bridle, the Northwich RUFC Commercial Sponsorship Director stated: -

"The local business who support Northwich RUFC have already pledged over £2k to the John Blower Trust, they are all keen to help it's been a case of them knocking on my door instead of me chasing them. The



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business community of Northwich are really helping John to make a difference".

Steve McCafferty the Winnington Park RUFC Treasurer said at a recent Northwich/Winnington Park RUFC joint working team in aid of the John Blower Trust: -

"The Northwich RUFC business sponsors have set a target for the Winnington Park RUFC sponsors. I hope that they will be able to match them all the way and surpass the target they have set. Winnington Park RUFC sponsors are already contacting us asking how they can help the trust."

Tim Pickering the Manager of the John Blower Trust monthly prize draw said,

" The aim is to get at least 200 people enrolled for the prize draw, all they have to do is sign a monthly standing order form for £5 per month. Each month one lucky winner will be drawn out from the prize draw contributions and will receive 25% of the monthly taking. Currently we have just over 60 contributors, with the first draw t the start of March."

Andy Naylor makes a final plea to the people of Northwich,

" You can make the difference to John's life today. All you have to do is help by contributing what you can to the Trust. Any amount is welcome for I know that John's inspiration has come from the way that individuals have contributed. It is this support that the people of Northwich show him that keeps him positive and focused."



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Any one wanting any prize draw forms, or wishing to contribute to the John Blower Fund can contact Andy Naylor on 01606 76200 or 07966 978413, or alternatively write to him at John Blower Trust, C/O A.E. Naylor 10, Townfield Court, Barnton, Northwich CW8 4 UT. Any cheques should be made out to N.R.U.F.C. John Blower Fund.

Andy Naylor
Chairperson
John Blower Trust
24/01/04



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