

“RUNNING THE LONDON MARATHON FOR OUR LOCAL CHILDREN’S HOSPICE WAS ALL THE MOTIVATION WE NEEDED.”

MEET THE WOMEN WHO RAN THE LONDON MARATHON TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CLAIRE HOUSE CHILDREN’S HOSPICE IN MEMORY OF THEIR SISTER.



The unique bond that forms between sisters is difficult to explain to only children, or siblings who have grown up with brothers. Nicol Adcock and Claire Sopp were no different; their bond with their sister felt like all they had ever known. Nicol and Claire lost their sister Sian to Leukemia in 1990. Sian was just four years old, and spent her final weeks at Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool. It was a confusing experience for them, as they were only young themselves. “I don’t remember too much about our Sian before she was ill, I suppose we got on like any other family.” Regardless of their age, losing their sister is burned into their memories.

In this year’s London Marathon in the year that would have been Sian’s 30th birthday, Nicol and Claire decided to run in her memory and for Claire House Children’s Hospice, based in Merseyside. Together they raised over £8,000, beating their £6,000 target, the costs of running the hospice for a full day.

Claire House was only partially built during Sian’s lifetime, so she couldn’t access their outstanding care, though she was friends with the young girl who the hospice was named after, Claire Cain, who died weeks before her 10th birthday in 1989. The majority of Sian’s care was understandably very medical in its nature. Nicol and Claire couldn’t really spend much time with Sian when she was admitted because the visiting times were quite specific. When recalling her sister’s illness, Nicol mainly remembers the other families and how everyone supported each other.

Since 1998 Claire House has supported seriously and terminally ill children and young adults as well as their parents and siblings, providing specialist nursing care and emotional support. Their team of specialist nurses and care staff give respite to parents who are

used to being carers 24/7.

At the time, Nicol and Claire didn’t fully understand the toll Sian’s illness was taking on their parents. As they got older, became parents themselves, and continued to remember their sister, they saw the work that Claire House was doing and knew they had to help.

After several months of training, rugby injuries, chest infections, and thousands of pounds in support, Nicol and Claire successfully ran the London Marathon together. “Finding methods to cope with the pain and staying focused was difficult to begin with, but whatever I felt I knew was temporary.” The children at Claire House remained at the forefront of their minds throughout.

Claire House provide therapeutic play for children including physiotherapy and music therapy, days out for siblings and, when the time comes, the very best end of life care. They help create special moments for families and memories that last a life time. They allow families to smile again when times couldn’t get any tougher.

Running the London Marathon for Claire House has helped Nicol and Claire’s family to heal. “Whenever we talk about Sian in the future, we can be happy about doing something positive in her name and not just feel sad that she isn’t with us.”

On the 4th September, they spent the day with the children at Claire House, and saw how their £8,000 would be used. “It was an amazing experience. Visiting the hospice was even more humbling than the marathon and all the training that we did.” The sisters saw first hand how their fundraising was helping children.

Both women love that the staff at Claire House focus on the immediate comfort of the children and their patents and help them celebrate every moment. They wish that Sian could have experienced the same thing, but helping other children access this level of care is the next best thing.

“If you get the good news that you have won a place in the London Marathon 2017, please pick up the phone and call Claire House, just like we did. You can use your place to really help families that need your support.”

Words by Helen McCarthy



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