

NEWS

#localandproud

Racers gear up for soapbox race

WACKY racers will be taking part in a soap box derby this weekend in Stoke-on-Trent.

People of all ages will be racing their own designs against each other on a 400-metre track at Hanley Park on Sunday between 11am and 4.30pm.

Prizes will also be on offer at the free event.

'Everyone should have these tests – it could save your life'

Jack Furness

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Screening process set up by postman's family spotted Lucy's heart defect

TEENAGER Lucy Smith has been fitted with a life-saving

pacemaker – after a major heart defect was uncovered at a screening set up in memory of a postman.

The 17-year-old was whisked to A&E straightaway after the tests revealed a block causing her heart rate to be dangerously low.

And within 11 days she was in the operating theatre having the pacemaker fitted.

Now one month on, she has made a complete recovery and is encouraging others to get themselves checked out.

South Cheshire College student Lucy, from Waterhayes, said: "It's incredible to think I had no idea there was anything wrong until I went to the screening. It's scary what could have happened."

"Everyone should have these tests. You never know, it could save your life."

Lucy was persuaded by mum Tracey Smith to undergo screenings after they spotted a Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) advert for a session at Sir Thomas Boughey High School on September 3. It had been paid for by the family of popular postie Daniel Hughes who was found dead in his bed at his Bignall End in March last year aged just 28.

The cardiologist immediately noticed straight away there was something seriously wrong with Lucy's heart and she was taken to the Royal Stoke University Hospital.

Lucy, who is studying French, German and history, said: "As far as we were concerned, it was just routine. We had no suspicions but we had heard there had been a tragedy with Dan Hughes."

"I had an ECG and the cardiologist said there was an abnormality but they did another just to be sure."

"I was really shocked, it was scary that I was being told this when I felt fine. I didn't feel I had a heart condition."

"I went straight to A&E and they got me into a cardiology ward. The doctors deliberated about what should happen because of my age and then recommended a pacemaker."

"It was quite daunting because I didn't know much about pacemakers. All I knew was they were used mainly in older people."

"It was fitted directly into my heart. I can feel it's there but it's not uncomfortable. It doesn't affect my day-to-day activities."

Latest figures show 12 apparently fit and healthy young people aged 35 and under die in the UK each week due to an undiagnosed heart condition.

Now mum Tracey is urging other parents to get their children tested.

The 43-year-old said: "I would encourage anybody to get their child tested. I'd also ask people to support CRY who put on these sessions."

"In an ideal scenario, screenings would be compulsory in school. It would pick up abnormalities before anything happened."

Daniel's family raised £7,000 to put on the two-day

screenings where 200 young people were tested. And they have generated cash to provide an annual screening weekend for five years.

His dad David, aged 58, of Bignall End, said: "Having lost our son we wanted to prevent this from happening to other families."

"This is the first screening we've had in Daniel's name and we're very proud of his legacy. It won't change things but the fact we've been able to save another family from what we went through has made everything worth it."

CRY now screens around 23,000 young people every year.

Chief executive Dr Steven Cox said: "Lucy's recent experience illustrates the absolute importance of CRY's screening programme."

"It was clear to our doctor on the day, something was very wrong and immediate action was required to prevent a potentially catastrophic event."



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GRATEFUL: Lucy Smith and, inset, postie Daniel Hughes.

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Police 'increasingly concerned' for missing man

POLICE are appealing for help to help find a missing man.

Francis Amos, aged 28, was reported missing from the Cobridge Road area of Cobridge, on September 27.

He is described as white, 5ft 9in tall with short, black hair. He is clean shaven and speaks with a Manchester accent.

He is believed to be wearing a blue Converse hooded top, black tracksuit bottoms, a navy blue T-shirt and blue trainers.

He is also carrying a bag. It is believed he may have travelled to the Blackpool or Blackburn areas of Lancashire.

A Staffordshire Police spokesperson said: "We would urge anyone who thinks they have seen Francis to get in touch as we are growing increasingly concerned for his welfare."

"If you have any information on his whereabouts please contact Staffordshire Police on 101 quoting incident number 376 of September 27."