

# PJ Foundation on the ball with summer fundraising

RIVAL football fans joined forces to raise money in memory of a young boy who tragically died due to a rare medical condition.

Paul James Cockburn, known as PJ, was just 12 when he suffered organ failure as a result of a condition known as Short Bowel Syndrome.

Despite his health steadily improving during his childhood, PJ, from Linlithgow, West Lothian sadly passed away in 2017. The PJ Foundation was set up in his memory to raise funds for the Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (ECHC) to help them transform the lives of young people undergoing treatment as they did for PJ.



Now, a pre-season friendly match between Hibernian and Linlithgow Rose has helped raise £430 for the PJ Foundation, with PJ's sister, Aimee, 15, acting as the Hibs mascot on the day.

Jill Cockburn, PJ's mother, said: "The match day was such an amazing experience and a big milestone for the Foundation. It was filled with a positive atmosphere and Aimee was delighted to mascot the Hibs team, especially as she plays for their

under 19s women's team.

"It has given us a great opportunity to reach more people and spread awareness of organ donation and ECHC's work, which are two causes that are really close to our hearts.

"We will always be grateful to ECHC for always putting a smile on our boy's face and filling his long stays at the hospital with fun. He was so fond of everyone there and made lots of good memories.

"Having a big banner with a photo of PJ on a football pitch was a proud moment to the foundation and our family. We even got a photograph with Neil Lennon and Mark Bradley, the Linlithgow Rose manager, which was one of the highlights of the day.

"Both supporters of the Rose and the Hibs have donated generously and their support is greatly appreciated."

PJ spent long periods of time spent at The Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) in Edinburgh, where he underwent numerous treatments over the years.

Following a sudden deterioration in health in early 2017, PJ's family was told that he would need a quadruple transplant to receive a new liver and an extra kidney, and to enhance his bowel and pancreas.

Despite the best efforts of doctors, PJ's condition didn't improve and he passed away surrounded by family, friends and a new dog he has always dreamed of.

However, PJ's contagious liveliness and joyful attitude live on through the PJ Foundation.

Since it was first established in October last year, the PJ Foundation has already helped to raise over £8,000 through their continuous fundraising efforts.

Just last month, the Foundation gathered donations through activities such as bag packing, taking part in a Kilt Walk and selling merchandise. They also hope to launch a website soon.

PJ's story has also touched the hearts of the Linlithgow community. Linlithgow Primary School, which PJ attended, have already raised over £500 in 1p and 2p coins, while the local Beaver Scouts have gathered £142 by filling Smarties tubes with 20p coins.

Sue Diamond, Community Fundraising Manager at ECHC, said: "The support that the PJ Foundation provides is invaluable and epitomises the spirit and joy PJ brought into the lives of so

many.

“We could not be more thankful to his family for their hard work which helps us put a smile on the faces of other young people undergoing treatment.”

ECHC provides vital support to the RHSC and to a number of other locations across east central Scotland where children and young people are treated, including St John’s Hospital in Livingston.

The funds raised by ECHC not only help to support research in pioneering treatments but also help to fund equipment and activities that improve young people’s hospital experiences, so that they can be a child first and a patient second.

To find out more about the PJ Foundation, visit: [www.facebook.com/PJFoundation1310](http://www.facebook.com/PJFoundation1310)

For more information about Edinburgh Children’s Hospital Charity, visit: [www.echcharity.org](http://www.echcharity.org)