

# **Teenager invited to Duke of Edinburgh's celebration**

**Teenager Rosa Ross was invited to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award This is Youth celebration at Buckingham Palace, in recognition for her resilience during cancer treatment.**

She was named Boundary Breaker of the Year for doing her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award at the same time.

The 14-year-old Trinity Academy pupil was diagnosed with stage four non-Hodgkin lymphoma a year ago, just four months after beginning her bronze Duke of Edinburgh. She used the award as a focus during weeks of treatment involving chemotherapy, immunotherapy, steroids and operations. She used her Volunteer section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) to help organise ward activities to bring other young cancer patients together. She also offered support to those worried about hair loss.

Rosa was determined to continue singing as part of her DofE Skills section. She said: "My lungs had partially collapsed with treatment, so part of my physio was blowing bubbles to try and encourage my lungs to work. We used to sing a lot of Taylor Swift – it was the highlight of my week and really good for increasing my lung capacity. I had to have nasal oxygen and I was sleeping sitting upright as the tumour was pressing on my lungs, so it was definitely a challenge.

"I had the mindset of, if I have to go through this horrible experience, there must be something good to come out of it. I could see how much going through cancer treatment absolutely

sucks and if I could do anything to make it a tiny bit easier for the other young people, just a tiny smile or a laugh, I wanted to. It meant I could enjoy aspects of my time, while also helping others.

“I’d support the staff by going and having a chat with any young people who were worried about losing their hair. I could give a first-hand perspective and say ‘yes it’s terrible, but when it comes back it looks like this’. I’d let them try on things like a fun pink wig and a headband that looks like hair, or my wig. I think it makes it less scary. I was losing my hair at the same time, so it felt like we were in it together. One of the kids left me a note saying thank you and signed it ‘from your new friend’ which meant a lot.

“I don’t want people to think they can’t do something just because they can’t do it like everyone else is – they might be able to work around it. By doing my DofE, I felt like I’d accomplished something, and I could come out of my time in hospital with something to show for it. I went through this horrible experience, but look what I could get out of it. I knew I wanted to carry on to the Silver Award, and I hope to go all the way to Gold one day.”

Rosa was selected by category judges Jodie Ounsley – aka ‘Fury’ from Gladiators – and DofE Youth Ambassadors Abi and Freya, was celebrated alongside six other This is Youth winners at a star-studded event hosted by The Duke at Buckingham Palace\*. They shared their stories – and afternoon tea – with His Royal Highness and this year’s This is Youth judges.

**This is Youth Boundary Breaker of the Year judge, Jodie Ounsley, said:** “Rosa’s determination and resilience are among the reasons she stood out to me as this year’s Boundary Breaker of the Year winner. Receiving a cancer diagnosis is tough no matter your age and I am in complete awe of her positivity and selflessness during this time of her life.

“Rosa’s positivity knows no bounds and to hear how that positivity, coupled with her DofE, has brought young people together, reducing isolation and providing reassurance, makes her a shining example of what This is Youth Boundary Breaker of the Year stands for. Congratulations Rosa – you are so deserving of this recognition.”



