



# Anaphylaxis Campaign

Supporting people at risk of severe allergies

## PRESS RELEASE

### RESIDENTIAL CAMP FOR CHILDREN IS AWARDED 'COMMUNITY ALLERGY HERO' AWARD

A free therapeutic residential camp, held specifically for children with severe allergies, has been awarded a Community Allergy Hero Award, by Allergy UK. The camp event was organised by the children's charity Over The Wall in partnership with Anaphylaxis Campaign and took place at PGL Liddington in Wiltshire in autumn 2017.

The one-off weekend-long, Health Challenge Camp was designed exclusively for members of Anaphylaxis Campaign, with 20 children between the age of 8-13 attending the adventure activity centre, PGL Liddington in Wiltshire. Over The Wall planned and hosted the residential camp specifically for children with severe or multiple allergies at risk of life threatening reactions, to enable them to enjoy a weekend without restriction, stigmatisation and fear.

The nomination noted that, *"the four-day camp catered for 20 children sharing over 45 allergies. Incredible effort was made to ensure the entire camp environment was safe, and a menu was created with multiple options at every meal where every single child could have every single item on the menu. Behind the scenes, extensive training for all staff and volunteers on allergies and anaphylaxis was provided, which was extended to anyone even visiting camp."*

Between them, the 20 campers had around 45 different allergies to food and the environment, all of which had to be either removed, reduced or mitigated against. Extensive consultation, and vigilance, was required to ensure the preparation and content of food was safe and posed minimal risk to campers and a bespoke menu was created and individual ingredients sourced. This menu had to be revised several times as campers were diagnosed with new allergies.

Nine-year old Josh, who has allergies to various food types including egg, nuts and sesame seeds, as well as asthma, attended the camp. His mum Alicia said *"Josh raved about the food- it was wonderful. Imagine the feeling of being told he could eat anything from the buffet. He could do whatever he wanted to do, eat what he wanted for once. He is very used to being the one that has to sit out - so this was great for him. To be included rather than excluded. At school Josh has a packed lunch and sits on a particular table, that is cleaned thoroughly, and he has to wait for the go-ahead before he can sit down. Here he could sit anywhere - and he could enjoy the whole social aspect of eating."*

*"What was really special for me was that the camp volunteers described him as 'an outgoing boy'. This was a massive thing for us - because he's not outgoing at school. The fact that camp brought that out*

*of him was phenomenal. He felt so relaxed, safe and happy - that he could be himself, and be that outgoing person, rather than worry about a condition he simply happens to have."*

**Elaine Ward, Deputy Chief Executive of the Anaphylaxis Campaign, said:**

*"We are absolutely delighted that our partner camp with Over the Wall has won the Community Allergy Hero Award. A lot of work was put in by all parties behind the scenes to ensure that our young members remained safe during the residential weekend and had the freedom to enjoy themselves. The feedback we received about the weekend was fantastic. Living with a severe allergy can be challenging, but with support young people can be empowered to be more confidently in control of their lives."*

**CEO of Over The Wall, Kevin Mathieson said:**

*"There are very few opportunities for young people with severe allergies to come together, to stay away from home, be active, and eat together - without having to worry about their condition. We are incredibly proud that the success of his project has been recognised by Allergy UK. Over The Wall now plans to host another camp in 2018 with an increased number of campers helping even more children to improve their sense of self-worth, self-belief, self-confidence – to enhance their abilities, meet new friends and try new things."*

The one-off camp was made possible by funding from the Big Lottery Fund, Children in Need and The Openwork Foundation.

Since 1998, Over The Wall has provided children with serious health challenges, (from the age of 8-17) with the opportunity to attend therapeutic residential camps enabling them to reach beyond their perceived limitations, and rediscovering a world of possibilities.

The Anaphylaxis Campaign is the only UK wide charity solely focused on supporting people at risk of severe allergic reactions, providing information and support to people living with severe allergies, their families and carers, through a national helpline, volunteer-led local support groups and free online AllergyWise training courses.

**Carla Jones, Chief Executive of Allergy UK said:**

*"Allergy has a huge impact on the lives of the people that live with this disease every day and their families. Around 21 million people in the UK with some form of allergic disease, and the number is rising, particularly children with food allergy and yet it remains misunderstood and even trivialised. This event is a fantastic opportunity to both create awareness about allergy and also to celebrate our Allergy Heroes."*

The evening recognises and celebrates unsung heroes who have either shown great support for someone living with allergy; done amazing things despite suffering from allergy themselves; or who have helped the 21 million allergy sufferers in the UK by doing their best to raise awareness and understanding of this often debilitating condition or have provided innovative research and treatments to improve symptoms of the disease.

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

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### **About the Anaphylaxis Campaign**

The Anaphylaxis Campaign is the only UK wide charity solely focused on supporting people at risk of severe allergic reactions. We empower people living with severe allergies to be more confidently in control of their lives.

We provide information and support to people living with severe allergies, their families and carers, through our national helpline, volunteer-led local support groups and free online AllergyWise training courses. We also campaign and fundraise to achieve our ultimate aim, to create a safer environment for all people at risk of severe allergies.

### **About Over the Wall**

Over The Wall is a national charity providing free therapeutic activity camps for children aged 8-17 affected by serious illness and their families. Our camps boost the children's confidence & resilience, giving them access to a range of activities whilst building up a support network of friends facing similar struggles. We support over 650 children and families each year, through a UK wide network of camps.

### **About Allergy UK**

Allergy UK is the leading national charity which provides advice and support to people with allergies. Allergy UK acts as the 'voice' of the UK's millions of people with allergy, representing the views and healthcare needs of those affected by this multi-organ disease.