Odd socks, bracelets and a ski challenge for Gresham’s pupils supporting WDSD

The Gresham’s community has been raising awareness of Down Syndrome with renewed vigour, wearing OddSocks as part of Down Syndrome International’s global campaign, and doing much more besides, including raising an estimated £3000 for the charity.

Wednesday 21st March was World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) and the Gresham’s community raised awareness of Down Syndrome with renewed vigour, joining people around the world in wearing OddSocks as part of Down Syndrome International’s global campaign, and doing much more besides, including raising an estimated £3000 for the charity.

Dr Edwarsd, mother of Year 4 pupil Lucas who has Down Syndrome, decided in the summer (when Lucas turned 10) to do something slightly different to celebrate Lucas and raise awareness of Down Syndrome, listing December tom and sell bracelets to raise funds. Dr Edwards came across a Year 10 pupil in a skiing bracelet that she had been making for a few years at the school’s Christmas Fair and she asked her sister Clare, with Dr Edwarsd, to undertake the design of a new range of bracelets, each one unique, yet united by a common theme – a small bag featuring on one side the numbers 17 and 85 to highlight the number of chromosomes that people with and without Down Syndrome have. The words ‘I am would feature on the other side.

Dr Edwards explained ‘Lucas asks me many questions with the simple words ‘I am’ as he thinks that this, along with “I don’t” and “yes of course”, covers most situations well enough, but says “I am who I am” and just being me. To me, these words really sum up our celebration of Lucas’s positive outlook and all that is expected of us in our campaign and the bracelets with the words ‘I am’ are about encouraging everyone to take their whole self into the world without a second thought.

Pupils were invited over a series of consecutive Saturdays during half-term time to meet Dr Edwards and Lucas and, with the support of the Clare, Lisa (Lucas’s sister and Year 10 pupil at Gresham’s), to make the bracelets, with an overwhelming 60 people aged 6 to 80 keen to participate on each occasion. 800 unique bracelets were made. 800 bracelets have already sold to pupils at the school and their families, the Edwards’, friends and family, local members of the community who have seen the bracelets on sale in Holt and as far-field as Brazil, New Zealand and the United States, as well as a number of European countries, and approximately £3000 has been raised for Down Syndrome International.

Dr Edwards said “We want to do even more to celebrate all of Lucas’s achievements and to make him known. When he was born we didn’t know what to expect but, as he left behind, he has been amazing. He is 10 years old, for the past five years, has been taught by Mrs Ken, a wonderful teacher, at the Ecole de Six Franches, with the support of Austria and ESF, which closed 2020 the Three Valleys Resort for the occasion. Lucas took on a personal ski challenge on Wednesday 21st March, with family, friends and staff skiing. Lucas and all the ESF team wore odd socks as part of the awareness and the bracelets are on sale in the resort. One of the highlights of the day was quite coincidentally, when Lucas saw a fellow pupil who also has Down Syndrome. Lucas didn’t at first say anything, but the other child who has Down Syndrome and he quite happily realized something about them and said: ‘Mama, they are like me.”

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