

## **Leighton's story....via his Mum.**

Leighton was born very very early, in fact 11wks early. On his 2nd day we were told he wouldn't survive. He would stop breathing up to 30 times a day but he held on and days turned into weeks and at 9 weeks old we brought him home. Every 2months we had to go to hospital an see his consultant. We had the portage team to visit twice a week and we were given a long list of things he wouldn't able to do and to expect that. Having been told he had motor dyspraxia and verbal dyspraxia it did get difficult, as many people simply don't know what it is.

Even now his teachers expect more from him. Lucky for Leighton who is now 10, he is one of the sportiest people I have ever met. He is the boy that the younger boys want to be like, he plays for Tavistock community football team, is on the school running team, also on the east Cornwall harriers team. He runs down in Newquay for his team, in the school cross country he came 4<sup>th</sup>, but it's the longer distances that he likes.

So here is his challenge: Leighton and his dad went for a run, running past a house that had a lift instead of steps, Leighton asked a lot of questions as to why someone needed a lift and we were able to answer all cause its' a friend of the family. This man has Motor Neurone Disease (MND) and is now at a bad stage. We explained everything to Leighton who then wanted to meet him. It was very sweet, and he walked away saying he wanted to raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease association.

He set himself the challenge of running 30 miles in 2 days in August. So he trained hard!!!! He wanted to raise £300 and we set up a just giving page (Leighton Howe @ just giving) and in 15 hrs he raised £367. As word spread over Face book the amount continued to rise. So race day was here on a very rainy misty day Leighton and his dad set off from Rame Head in Cornwall on to Whitsand, Seaton on to Looe. Unfortunately some of the coastal paths were closed, and when he should have run 17miles he had in fact run 27 with still more to do the next day!! We told Leighton to call it a day but no, he wanted to go to his first day finish which was Polperro. Wet through to the bone, on the first day 33miles had been completed.

On the 2nd day Leighton leapt out of bed and wanted to get on and do the last bit which was 7 miles. The day couldn't have been more different. The sun was shining and the boys set off from Lostwithiel on to the finish at Fowey. The family of the man with motor neurone disease all live in Fowey and the quay was packed with people, Leighton and his dad came round the corner to a huge hero's welcome. It was so emotional.

On the quay £100 was collected in a bucket. In all £1669 has been raised by Leighton. On the way home he said 'so what can I do next?' Leighton's dad did suffer quite a bit but Leighton went home to play football. The next few weeks consisted of Leighton appearing in the papers and being all over Facebook. He just doesn't want to stop, and why should he. His love for running is amazing, he is in his own world where he can be himself. I hope that you can show this to others in the hope that their child can just start ticking those things off and believing that anything is possible.