

PRESS RELEASE

April 2018

A close shave for anorexia survivor Sophie as she fundraises to help others with the condition

A young woman who has suffered from anorexia and depression for nearly a decade is having her head shaved this week as part of a fundraising campaign to help other sufferers of the illness.

Twenty-one-year-old Sophie Mitchell, who was first diagnosed at the age of 12, has been raising money and awareness for BEAT, one of the UK's leading eating disorder charities, for over a year.

Last year, Sophie defied the odds and took part in a 2000m sponsored swim at Bradley Stoke Active Lifestyle Centre, where she has been a member for many years. She also led several quiz nights, bake sales and karaoke evenings, which put her in touching distance of her original fundraising target of £2000.

Since increasing the target to £3000 earlier this year, Sophie has taken part in a 15,000ft skydive, which she has described as the 'best experience of her life'. Her shave will be taking place at Bradley Stoke Active Lifestyle Centre on Friday 6th April at 10:15am, with the public welcome to attend. The event will also be broadcast over [Facebook Live](#).

Having spent nearly six months in hospital at one point during her illness, Sophie knows the devastating effects that eating disorders can have on sufferers and their families. However, with the assistance of Joanna Nowak, her personal trainer at Bradley Stoke Lifestyle Centre, Sophie has continued to transform her life through the adoption of a healthy diet and regular regime of exercise and has now reached a healthy weight.

Sophie says: "The past two years have been a whirlwind of emotions since meeting Joanna. I've had my ups and downs, overcoming a lot of demons to be where I am today. My strength, confidence & self-esteem are improving day by day thanks to the ongoing support I receive from Joanna. She is so much more than a personal trainer to me and I cannot explain how much of an effect she has had on my life.

"The progress I've made has been vast and it's shocking how much my life has transformed in a short space of time. Through fitness training, weight lifting and great nutrition, I can finally say that I'm on track to becoming the best version of myself. With Joanna by my side, I'm now pursuing my dreams of competing at the highest level in fitness and I'm determined to reach them.

"Eating disorders are extremely dangerous and have a massive effect on the whole family, so I'm determined to raise as much money as possible for BEAT, because the help they provide really is invaluable. I want anyone suffering to know that they aren't alone and are worth so much more than their illness. We're all beautiful and unique in our own way, so let's stop hating ourselves and start embracing who we are. Then we can start using our limitless talents and beliefs to do some good.

"It felt right to have my head shaved at the Bradley Stoke Lifestyle Centre because they've provided me with so much support and I'm really grateful that they've been such a big part of my journey."

Joanna Nowak said: "I continue to be blown away by everything that Sophie has achieved. She has made so much progress and is now completely focussed on helping those who are going through a similar experience. She is a real inspiration."

Rob Candlin, centre Manager said: "As Active Lifestyle Centres, we're dedicated to helping people lead active, happy and healthy lives – both physically and mentally. We always look for ways to

support the local community and think it's crucial to be there for people like Sophie, who might require that extra level of support. She's worked extremely hard to come this far and we'll be cheering her on as she continues to raise money and awareness for BEAT this week."

In addition to her skydive and this week's shave, Sophie will be taking part a number of fundraising events throughout the year.

To find out more about Sophie's fundraising campaign, or to help her to reach her fundraising target, please visit her JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Sophie-Mitchell11>

To find out more about the Bradley Stoke Active Lifestyle Centre, please visit: <https://www.activecentres.org/centres/bradley-stoke/>

ENDS

Photo caption: Sophie Mitchell, who has suffered from anorexia and depression, is having her head shaved this week as part of a fundraising campaign to help other sufferers of the illness.

Notes to editor:

For further information contact liam.bettinson@jbp.co.uk or karen.white@jbp.co.uk
Alternatively, please call 0117 907 3400

About Circadian Trust

- Circadian Trust operates five leisure centre sites and a dual-use sports centre across South Gloucestershire in Bradley Stoke, Downend, Kingswood, Longwell Green, Thornbury and Yate and is a company and charity. Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, the community strategy and overall shared philosophy is to contribute to the improved health, cultural and social wellbeing of the local community improving quality of life.
- Any profit made by the Trust is reinvested to improve facilities, equipment and services for its customers.
- For more information, visit: www.circadiantrust.org