**Laura Johnson trekking to Machu Picchu for Pancreatic Cancer Action**

On September 4th Laura Johnson of Leeds will take up the challenge of trekking to Machu Picchu for Pancreatic Cancer Action.

Laura hopes to raise over £3950.00 by completing the trek. Laura said: “I decided to take part in this challenge for Pancreatic Cancer Action because in 2011 my niece, Lydia, was diagnosed with Pancreoblastoma stage 4, a rare form of cancer that affects just one child every two years in the UK. She began chemotherapy but just 3 months later we were told that the tumours in her pancreas and liver had not shrunk enough for surgery to be an option. Against all odds, she is still very much with us and is doing well having had both successful surgery on her pancreas and a liver transplant from her mum.”

Laura is focusing on her training, hitting the gym hard, completing some 10k runs as well as walking 10 miles after work every Thursday. Laura said “When I signed up over a year ago it didn’t feel real, but now as my training is increasing and I have bought my boots, it suddenly feels very real! It will be a really tough trek, including four days of trekking between 5 and 9 hours a day. There is also the issue of altitude, and the highest point will be 4440 metres above sea level! This is the first time I’ve ever attempted anything like this so I’m anticipating that it will be quite a challenge. It will be great to know that I will be raising funds to improve early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and make people aware of this grim disease that is remarkably underfunded in terms of research.”

Pancreatic Cancer Action is committed to working towards earlier diagnosis of the disease so that surgery, currently the only cure, is made available to the sufferer.

Ali Stunt, Founder of Pancreatic Cancer Action, said: “We are delighted that Laura is giving her time to support Pancreatic Cancer Action. As a charity, we rely on the generosity of individuals like Laura to help us continue our vital work. Please back Laura in their fundraising efforts so that we can continue research into early diagnosis and raise awareness of pancreatic cancer.”

To sponsor Laura please visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/LauraJohnson684.

From running your local 5K to skydiving, and cycling from London to Brighton to dyeing your hair purple, Pancreatic Cancer Action has a number of ways you can take part in a fun fundraising activity. To find out more, please visit <http://pancreaticcanceraction.org/support-us/fundraise/> or call 0303 040 1770

**ENDS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**Notes to Editor:**

**About Pancreatic Cancer Action**

Pancreatic Cancer Action is a charity based in the UK whose mission is to change pancreatic cancer survival number and focus on improving early detection statistics. The charity’s approach is to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer to the public, the medical community and Government, provide education and training on pancreatic cancer to medical professionals and fund research specifically into improving early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

Founded by Ali Stunt, who is herself a rare survivor of the disease. Pancreatic Cancer Action has the support of many leading clinicians and researchers in the pancreatic cancer arena along with others whose lives have been touched by pancreatic cancer in some way.

**Further information about pancreatic cancer**

Pancreatic cancer is currently very difficult to diagnose. Upon diagnosis, most sufferers find they have untreatable terminal cancer with an average life expectancy of between three to six months. Surgery is currently the only cure for pancreatic cancer, but only 10% are diagnosed in time for this to be an option.

Classic symptoms for pancreatic cancer include painless jaundice, significant weight loss, new onset diabetes not associated with weight gain and new onset of persistent or significant abdominal pain and/or back pain.

Statistics:

* **5-year survival is only 3%. This figure has not changed over 40 years**
* **Pancreatic cancer is the 5th leading cause of cancer death in the UK**
* **22 people a day die of pancreatic cancer in the UK[[1]](#endnote-1)**
* **Relative survival to 5 years is only 3%**
* **Relative survival to 1 year is less than 20% and one of the worst rates in Europe**
* **82% of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the UK will die within a year**
* **Only 10% of patients are eligible for potentially curative surgery due to late diagnosis[[2]](#endnote-2)**
* **47% of people are diagnosed as an emergency in our A&E system[[3]](#endnote-3)**
* **It is the 11th most common cancer for men, and the 8th most common cancer for women**
* **In 2008, 8085 people were newly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the UK**
* **In 2009 8,085 people died from pancreatic cancer in the UK**
* **40% of patients are under the age of 69 at diagnosis[[4]](#endnote-4)**
* **Deaths from pancreatic cancer increased between 2002 and 2009 while deaths from many other cancers declined**
* **Pancreatic cancer is the 5th most common causes of cancer death in the UK, yet received less than 1% of total cancer research funding**
* **The National Cancer Research Institute (‘NCRI’) (Strategic Analysis 2002) identified that pancreatic cancer is “underfunded given its incidence and mortality rates’. Despite this, there has since been no significant increase in funding available.**

1. Based on 2009 UK mortality figures [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. White et Al., (1999) in Sultana et al., (2007) Systematic review, including meta-analysis, in the management of locally advanced pancreatic cancer using radiation/ combined modal therapy. British Journal of Cancer 96, 1183-1190 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. NCIN, 2010 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Based on Office for National Statistics Statistical Bulletin: Cancer Survival in England patients diagnosed 2004-2008 followed up to 2009 published 21 April 2011 <http://statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/can0411.pdf> accessed 30/04/2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)