



Press Release

Immediate Release

16 September 2024

Mansfield Care Worker Skydives in Memory of Partner

“At 16,000feet, I looked up and said one last goodbye”

A Support Worker at a residential care service in Nottinghamshire has completed a skydive in memory of his partner who died after suffering with a chronic long condition.

Pete Colclough, 41, works at Cygnet Social Care's Cherry Tree House in Mansfield Woodhouse, where he supports individuals living with learning disabilities and autism.

He embarked on a daring skydiving challenge after losing the love of his life, Dave Holtham, from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Bronchiectasis.

He has raised more than £600 for Asthma and Lung UK, which supports people living with lung conditions, carrying out vital research and campaigning for better respiratory health.

Talking about Dave's condition, Pete explained: “For eight years his condition was typically well managed, he'd get regular chest infections but they would improve with antibiotics.

“That was until the Covid pandemic where he had to isolate at home and this had a big impact on his mental health, as well as his physical condition.

“I ended up taking three months unpaid leave to isolate with him as bringing the virus back home to him would have almost certainly been a life sentence for him pre vaccine.”

In December 2022, Dave unfortunately caught the virus and he was admitted into hospital with Covid pneumonia which had him in a lot of pain and needing oxygen, as well IV antibiotics.

The effects were long-lasting and one day, in April 2023, Dave woke up hardly able to walk, unable to eat or drink anything and with his breathing getting worse, he was admitted back into hospital where he was diagnosed with a lung infection. From April to November 2023, Dave spent most of that time in hospital.

Pete explained: "I feared that he'd push me away as his condition got worse, when in fact it was the total opposite. He put all his trust in me and I'd spend my days off visiting him and carrying out his care needs. Depending on how his health was, I'd take him out in a wheelchair to get some fresh air."

During these eight months Dave's health was up and down regularly. He was in a lot of pain and was breathless throughout, regularly needing oxygen and different medication.

"The infection kept adapting to the antibiotics and fighting back," Pete said.

In November 2023, Dave and Pete received the devastating news that, with the treatment no longer working, Dave was being moved to end of life care.

"He chose for this to be at home as he wanted to have as much time with me as possible," Pete explained.

"I got our home ready for him to come home and we accepted the help of a carer on the days I was at work to give me peace of mind.

"Every day was a challenge, especially the days I was at work, I'd wake up early to get everything ready before doing a 12-hour shift. The shifts were tough, knowing that any day I might come home and find Pete had passed away. "I realised I was feeling burnt out but I found the strength to carry on."

On 7 December 2023, Dave passed away in his sleep.

"I was so thankful that I had been with him when he died and that he wasn't alone."

Wanting to raise awareness of the condition, and to honour Dave's memory, Pete decided to embark on the skydive challenge.

"I did the skydive in Dave's memory but also to help others going through lung conditions.

"Before the jump, at 16000ft, I looked up and said one last goodbye.

"I really enjoyed the jump itself, I don't seem to have much sense of fear.

"It takes your breath away at first but once the parachute opens, you get some spectacular views for miles and miles.

"I chose a skydive as it was symbolic of why I was doing a sponsored event, falling from heaven and whilst up there in the plane, taking a moment to reflect and say goodbye."

"One in five of us will develop a lung condition during our lifetime. There's a new diagnosis every minute.

"Asthma and Lung UK are the only UK charity that fights for everyone's right to breathe. Every pound I'm able to raise will take us a step closer to a world where everyone has healthy lungs."

To donate, go to <https://www.justgiving.com/page/peter-colclough-1710884907884>

