

# 40 before 40: Making the m

Katy Mundford (Louth) tells Shanelle Manderson how her age inspired a fundra



**M**ILESTONE birthdays are an exciting time to mark a new stage in life, to celebrate and reflect on what you've achieved and overcome. For Katy Mundford (pictured top left), the big 4-0 was particularly significant for another reason.

For the year leading up to her 40th birthday in July, she was busy with her own '40 before 40' challenge, raising money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a genetic condition affecting more than 10,500 people in the UK. The gene linked to the condition controls the movement of salt and water in and out of cells, causing a build-up of thick, sticky mucus in the lungs, digestive system and other organs. This results in a wide range of challenging symptoms impacting the entire body. The Cystic Fibrosis Trust funds research to drive up standards of care and supports people with the condition.

Katy, who attends Louth Corps with her family, is mother to Iris and Ivy, two fun and cheery girls aged six and four. Both Iris and Ivy have CF. With the

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average life expectancy for someone living with CF about 40 years old, Katy decided to take on the mammoth task of organising 40 fundraising events before she reached that age.

'I'd just turned 39 and it kind of hit me that I wouldn't be ready to die at that age, I'm not anywhere near,' she explains. 'I had two friends with CF that passed away before the age of 40, and it all culminated together: I decided that the life expectancy for people with CF needed to change. I want my children to live to my age and beyond, and see their own children grow up.'

Iris and Ivy's days are filled with a lot of physiotherapy, medication and hospital appointments. People with CF are not meant to have contact with each

other due to the risk of passing on bugs, but this is hard to avoid.

'We do try to keep them at a distance if one of them has a cough or an infection,' says Katy. 'But, generally, we try to look at CF in a positive way. Although we never planned to have two children with the disorder, at least they'll grow up being able to talk to each other, because who else understands it better!'

The condition is as varied as the people who have it, so while Iris catches chest infections easily and has had operations to remove polyps – tissue growths that can block sinuses and airways in the nose – Ivy struggles with digestion and effective bowel movement.

However, nothing got in the way of them taking part in Katy's fundraising. The first event was a Wear Yellow Day – the Cystic Fibrosis Trust colour – at their school.

'All the children got involved,' enthuses Katy. 'Yellow flowers and cakes and many other things were on sale. We raised £658.'

A series of other events followed,

# Cost of a milestone

rising challenge



including a 1940s night, a darts tournament and the Big Bounce, a space hopper bounce along Cleethorpes seafront.

'We had the most fun with that one,' laughs Katy. 'Two adults and fourteen children all bouncing along dressed in yellow. It was great! I think it's going to become an annual event as well.'

Katy's family, friends and corps folk also joined in the challenge, taking part in everything from an endurance race to a balloon popping challenge in a sumo suit. Her friend, Kim Caville, ran for 24 hours to help raise money for the charity.

'I couldn't have done it on my own,' Katy vows. 'People held car boot sales, Grimsby Corps helped out, Shipley

Corps, where I grew up, threw a garden party, my friend's husband grew a moustache and we did a Step Out for CF in September last year, which involved four people completing 300,000 steps by the end of the month. The idea was that their children between them would have taken 300 tablets over September, so it was 1,000 steps per tablet.

'We also did small things, such as ask people for money instead of birthday presents and donations instead of Christmas cards.'

A lot of people came up with ideas on their own, but Katy also persuaded people to get involved. Although she never found it too challenging to organise, the pressure began to pile up when she only had one month left and six more things to do. And when she finally thought she'd completed the challenge, there was a complication.

'We'd miscounted the car boot sales, so we'd only done 38 events,' recalls Katy. 'Then I found out Shipley corps folk also took on 40 small challenges between them throughout the year

without me knowing, and somebody else asked for donations for their birthday instead of presents, so, in the end, I got it done!'

On her birthday they threw a big party to celebrate. The total amount raised was £4,386.

'I never really set a target,' admits Katy, 'but I thought it would be nice to raise £2,000. It became clear quite early on that we were going to raise more than that.'

To accomplish such a huge achievement felt great, she adds. She has learnt a few things too: 'I can do anything if I set my mind to it. I never thought about whether I'd have the time to do all this, but I'm glad I did. The girls loved it; they keep asking when we're going to do more.'

'If anything, it's shown me how much support we have from friends and family. It wasn't easy, but it was all really good fun.'

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● For more information about the Cystic Fibrosis Trust or to donate visit [cysticfibrosis.org.uk](http://cysticfibrosis.org.uk)