Norwich Evening News 24

10:44 > Wednesday 20th August 2008

I didn't let ME stop me helping others

TRACEY GRAY

18 August 2008 07:00

A 24-year-old who set up virtual vacations for people who are housebound is the latest person to be nominated for a Local Heroes Award.

Claire Wade. who has been nominated for our Local Heroes awards.

Claire Wade, who has the debilitating illness ME, is the creator of Holidays from Home which ensures that those who cannot be sent to exotic places have exotic places sent to them.

Using a variety of different methods such as books, photographs, the internet and audio CDs, holidaymakers are able to enjoy a week's worth of visits and tours to popular locations museums and galleries.

So far the scheme, which has won lottery funding, has been used by Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk and Norwich University.

Miss Wade, who lives in Yarmouth Road, Blofield, said: "This is a real honour because I do not think of myself as a hero, as what I do is to try and help other people make a difference to their own lives."

Her mum, Anita, nominated her in the Against All Odds category.

She said: "Claire has been an inspiration to us all through out her long and painful illness.

"Despite being ill for 15 years and bedbound for six of those she has used her experiences with severe ME to help others.

"Firstly with her work with local young ME sufferers and more recently in developing Holidays From Home.

"Working from her room Claire has almost single handed set up the voluntary organisation based on sending free Virtual Holidays to help relieve the boredom and frustration of bed and house bound people in Norfolk

"It was something we developed when she could not go on holiday when her brother and father went away. We had great fun and Claire thought that others would too.

"Claire has always remained so positive and her determination to help other people despite her own illness makes her a true local hero."

The awards evening will be held at Holiday Inn, Norwich City Airport which is an associate sponsor of the awards on Thursday, October 23. The closing date for entries is Monday, September 29.

The Against All Odds category will be voted for by Evening News readers.

James Foster, Evening News editor, said: 'The Evening News Local Heroes Awards are enormously popular with our readers and have become something of an institution in Norwich.

"As one of the most moving and inspiring categories it seemed right to us that it should be the people of Norwich who decide this year's Against All Odds winner.

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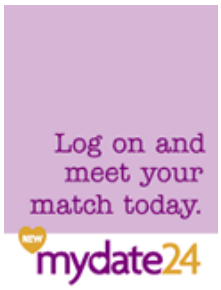
"Whoever wins, we know from previous years that all the shortlisted people will have amazing stories to tell - it would be an incredibly difficult job to select a winner and a readers' vote is the ideal way to arrive at a decision."

To nominate someone for an award fill in the entry form with the category, your nomination, their address and daytime telephone number and if possible a photograph.

To make sure we pick the most worthy winners please also include a separate summary of no more than 200 words telling us why you think your nomination deserves to be crowned a local hero.

The closing date for entries is Monday September 10. Send to Tracey Gray, Norwich Evening News, Prospect House, Rouen Road Norwich NR1 1RE. Mark the envelope Local Heroes. You can also nominate online via www.eveningnews24.co.uk



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