



About our Founder!



Emma Williams pictured with Matthew and MF Patron, Tony Tobin at the recent Matthew's Friends Rainbow Ball, 2010.

Background

Emma Williams is single mum to Matthew aged 15 and Alice aged 14. Matthew started having seizures at the age of 9 months. No matter what medication was tried, Matthew's seizures got progressively worse as did the side effects of the drugs he was given. He suffered terrible brain damage as a result and his life was in danger on numerous occasions. When Matthew was just 2 years old Emma found out about the Ketogenic Diet but every time she asked Matthew's Neurologist to try the diet she was told that it didn't work, it was disgusting and medication was the best option. Only when Matthew was 7 years old did she finally get the chance to get Matthew onto the diet thanks to the trial that Professor Helen Cross was carrying out at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Within 2 weeks of starting the diet Matthew's seizures had reduced by 90% and within 8 months he was off all medication. The Ketogenic Diet was the best thing to ever happen to Matthew as his quality of life has had a 100% improvement since the start of the diet and 2010 sees Matthew off the diet for nearly 3 years and the seizures have not returned. Emma discovered that the diet DID

work, it was NOT disgusting and medication is not always the best option and because of this she started the Matthew's Friends Charity in 2004 to share her experiences with others, provide support and promote the use of the ketogenic diet for those suffering with intractable epilepsy.

Today (2010)

Today Emma is one of the world's leading advocates for the Dietary Treatments for Epilepsy and has worked full time in this field ever since starting the charity, as well as bringing up Matthew and Alice. Not only does she have over 6 years personal experience of managing her own son with these diets, as well as supporting hundreds of other families through Matthew's Friends and other ketogenic centres around the globe, she also spends a vast amount of time working with other organisations looking into how Epilepsy services in general can be improved, especially for those suffering with intractable epilepsy. She has written numerous magazine articles, featured in many television/radio interviews and co-authored a review paper on the Ketogenic Diet with some of the leading Ketogenic experts in the UK.

Emma is invited to speak at numerous International meetings around the world and was the pioneer behind Nutricia's global 'Cooking with Ketocal' programme. She is the Parent Representative for the Ketogenic Professional Advisory Group for the UK and Ireland (KetoPAG), as well as being an International Patron for the 'Diets for Epilepsy in India' organisation. She has also recently been appointed the Chair for the Joint Epilepsy Council Health Group. With branches of Matthew's Friends now operating in South Africa and currently being registered in New Zealand and Australia, Emma's international workload is also increasing.



Pictured here with Jim Abrahams from The Charlie Foundation. Emma and Jim now work side by side in the promotion of The Ketogenic Diet.

"The Charlie Foundation and Matthews' Friends have been ignited and united by the identical fuel. We simply cannot and will not rest until we've done all we can to right this terrible wrong--and better health is made available to all those children, and others, with difficult to control seizures."

Jim Abrahams, The Charlie Foundation.

Next year Emma realises her ultimate dream... the opening of The Matthew's Friends Specialist Treatment and Training Centre for the treatment of both children and adults with Epilepsy using Diet, this will be based at The Neville Centre at NCYPE and is going to be the first of its kind.

What About Her Spare Time!


"What spare time?" is usually the phrase you will hear her say! However, she is an avid England Rugby supporter, so you won't get a lot of sense out of her while they are playing, but mostly she loves spending time with Matthew and Alice, her friends and family and she is a keen cook (very handy considering the job she does!) She loves the movies and reading but admits that she can't spend too much time away from her desk.

If you wish to contact Emma then please e-mail her on

emma@matthewsfriends.org

or telephone the helpline:

0788 4054811



"I absolutely love what I do, every day I get up excited about the new day. Some days can be frustrating and some very painful especially when you hear about a child suffering, but when you also hear about a child or adult getting better and enjoying their life again.... There is no better feeling or better reward for the hours of work that everyone puts in at Matthew's Friends.

Once your life has been touched by something as powerful as this then you can never walk away, I am honoured to represent families that are having to try and cope with Drug Resistant Epilepsy and I will never stop fighting on their behalf"

Emma Williams.

