

Students in abseil for Perthshire sight loss charity

Will Kent and Sarah Burns are scaling new heights to raise funds for VisionPK.

The friends met while studying at St Andrew's University in Fife last year and have teamed up to abseil down the Forth Bridge.

Will, from Forgandenny in Perthshire, suffers from Stargardt disease, a genetic condition that affects the macula of the eye.

He wants to raise £1,000 to help those with sight and hearing loss across Perth and Kinross.

A service user of VisionPK, he said: "This is a particularly challenging event for me while having this rare genetic eye disease. Any donation will make a real difference in someone's life, and I've got over £400 already on the JustGiving site for them. I really want to reach the target."

His community-based endeavours have already earned him a Duke of Edinburgh gold award and despite his loss of sight, pursues his passion for walking across the Fife and Perthshire countryside during breaks from his degree course in ancient and medieval history.

Sarah is a third-year student from Mishawaka, Indiana. She is a member of an international honours programme with the University and the College of William and Mary and has loved living in Scotland. Having enjoyed the charm of walking the Fife Coastal Path, she is now looking forward to creating another great memory with Will, although admits to having reservations.

She said: "It is scary as I've never done anything like this before, but I'm delighted to be fundraising for the charity which has helped Will in times of need. And what a beautiful area to do it in."

The iconic Forth Bridge – one of Scotland's Best Loved Landmarks - is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and will form the dramatic backdrop for the abseil on 28 September.

Will added: "Throughout my life I have been greatly supported by both my local community and the charity, as they taught me to cook and bake safely, and in doing so making me the bane of anyone I know seeking to diet. Other practical help such as

replacing my blind cane after I had an accident and supporting my wider family when my father suffered hearing loss is where the charity has really been there for us.

“By sponsoring me you will help others in a similar position, to embrace life and experience the world in full, and it is for these reasons, we have chosen to support this cause, and to take a leap of faith off the railway bridge.”

Other members of Will's family are rallying to the cause with his brother, Oliver, undertaking a skydive on the 14th of December to raise a further target of £500.

Kate Charles, Chief Executive of VisionPK, said: “We are very lucky to have inspirational service users such as Will, who are real ambassadors for demonstrating that anyone who is blind, partially sighted, deaf, or has a hearing loss condition can still live an independent life and achieve so much.

“We're sure students from the University, residents from across Fife and Perth and Kinross will get behind these two friends and be proud of them as much as we are as we as they raise funds to help maintain our services.”

VisionPK is the local sight and hearing loss charity for Perth and Kinross. Its work supports service users and their friends and families by offering emotional and practical support enabling them to continue to live their life.

To sponsor Will and Sarah's September abseil visit their JustGiving page at https://www.justgiving.com/page/leap-of-faith?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

To sponsor Oliver's skydive visit his JustGiving page at

https://www.justgiving.com/page/oliver-kent-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Notes to Editors

(picture caption for attachment)

Will Kent and Sarah Burns

To support VisionPK please visit <https://visionpk.org.uk/support-us/>

For Further information contact

Wendy Stenberg, Fundraising & Events Manager at VisionPK

Tel: 01738 626969 Mobile: 07900 707 544

Email: wendy.stenberg@visionpk.org.uk

ENDS