



# Luke's story

We are grateful to Rob Hubbard for sharing his personal account of the tragedy of his son Luke's death

**A drive straight up the middle of the first fairway in the warm sunshine of a Tenerife January morning. Me, Jan and two friends, a game of golf and Spanish lunch to look forward to.**

**The phone rang and our lives changed.**

Luke had arranged a roofing contract in Canada as a foreman on a three year deal. He needed to escape. Away from drink, away from drugs and away from those people. Maybe away from the depression that dogged him for many years. The date was in March; time to get away for a bit.

He decided to get a break with his oldest brother Adam, and on Christmas Day I dropped them both off at Heathrow for a month in Goa and Kerala. Just two days before they were due to fly home they went to a local bar; by the next day Adam called and said, "Dad, Its Luke!"

Adam had to carry his brother by taxi to the local Goan hospital to confirm what he feared. We travelled to London, met our other son Jack, got our Visa and then a flight to India. How we did that I can't recall, we just did.

Natural causes, said the Hyderabad Coroner; agreed, said the Essex Coroner.

Ultimately it was depression that dealt the card that led to that day, 21st January 2008. When Luke was in his early teens he started to feel uncomfortable in some company, preferring his bedroom to facing even family visits. Just being a teenager, we thought. At Christmas he stayed in his room; too much forced jollity, he said. We, being unaware of such things, let it go.

When it was time for drinking, he became a popular member of the pub,

spending time and money. A comfort. Each time harder to face, more drink, then cocaine, marijuana; the restless need to fight his lack of confidence.

Depression often leads to alcohol and drug dependence, which in turn feeds depression. We learned quickly. Our house turned from a happy family home to rows over money, drink, drugs and going to work. We didn't learn quickly enough.

At odds with all of this, Luke was becoming the bright star of the nights out. Funny, witty, holding court with all and sundry. He would include others and make people feel wanted and liked. He especially cared about old people and people who were vulnerable, perhaps seeing himself in them and trying to make their lives a bit better. He was a real joy when he was "normal" not hungover, not depressed (Seroxat controlled that) and not suffering the after effects of coke! He was a big, strong, lean, happy guy who lit the room up. He had no ambition other than to be happy. Didn't care for cars or material things, just contentment. He almost made it.

18 months on and we are in the middle of a fundraising year for Depression Alliance in memory of Luke. There seems to be no sign of charity fatigue! August a golf day, July a group of us did Tough Guy Challenge, September "Run to the Beat" at the O2 and so on. The tally is £14,000 raised with £4000 on top from the taxman. Not bad! Friends and family are spreading the word and we have at least 40 people doing runs, challenges, eating curries, auctions, quizzes, and various manic things to keep Luke's name up

the front to make sure Depression is in the open and not the dreaded "D" word. Remember "C"?

The local papers have been very good, highlighting our ventures but at the same time mentioning Depression. It has brought phone calls to us of fellow sufferers. We now recognise a sufferer, sometimes before they realise it themselves. How wonderful it would be to have a group of like minded people to sit down with over coffee and realise that they are not alone. Jan and I are thinking of starting something but being interested amateurs we are not sure where to start. This is where Depression Alliance comes in.

Today I received a letter from Luke's long time close friend. He got into bad ways with drink, drugs and criminal madness. He is serving time in prison for the third time and is just so down; his family have disowned him, he has no friends left bar one or two, and he feels his life has been a complete waste. He deliberately stole a bottle of brandy from Sainsburys to go back inside to be protected from drink and drugs. He tried to commit suicide. At last he has taken stock of his life and knows that Luke is watching him. It's the saddest letter I have ever read. If Luke was here he would and could help him. I would like to think that we can too.

Depression affects 1 in 4 people; it's all around you. It's not a case of pull your socks up, it's a clinical problem just like cancer, and it can often lead to the same end. Don't let it, do something now. To help with the funding check out [www.justgiving.com/forluke](http://www.justgiving.com/forluke).