

## Teenager donates bone marrow for her older sister



**SISTERLY LOVE:** Beth, left, and Aimee Easterbrooke-Smith who shaved off their hair to raise money for charity.

# Sisters are a perfect match

By **SUE KIRBY**

sue.kirby@northeast-press.co.uk  
Twitter: @SunderlandEcho

A DEVOTED teenager hopes to have given her sister battling cancer the gift of life

Beth Easterbrooke-Smith, 18, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia last November.

Despite gruelling chemotherapy, medics at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary told her family the only hope was to receive a bone marrow transplant.

Younger sister Aimee, 17, had no hesitation in stepping forward to be tested and was found to be an almost perfect match, usually only seen in twins.

Last week the procedure went ahead to harvest fashion design student Aimee's bone marrow and give it to Beth.

More than 1,400 millilitres of marrow was taken from Aimee's hips and now the family, from Roker, is keeping everything crossed her body will accept it.

Aimee said: "It was terrible when we found out she was so ill, but I was really pleased when I found out I was a match."

"I felt ill after the procedure, but it was worth all the pain."

"I've already told Beth she will have to let me borrow her clothes and everything now I've saved her life."

"We have always been close, but Beth going through all this has made our relationship even stronger."

Parents Sharon Easterbrooke-Smith,



**STILL SMILING:** Beth Easterbrooke-Smith, above and below.



a 43-year-old carer, and dad, Gary Smith, a 51-year-old plasterer, couldn't be more proud of both their daughters.

Sharon said: "It has been so much for

two young girls to go through, but they have coped really well with everything."

"The day of the transplant was dreadful, we had two daughters on two different wards both ill, and were going up and down between the two."

Beth is still very ill and being kept in isolation, but the family were told to expect this until Aimee's bone marrow gets to work in her sister's body.

Sharon said: "Beth had to go into hospital 10 days before the transplant, have really intensive chemotherapy and all of her own bone marrow removed."

"We were told she would be at her lowest afterwards."

"We are just so thankful that Aimee was a match."

"They told us parents wouldn't be a match and a sibling had a one-in-four chance of being a close enough match, we couldn't believe it when Aimee was a 99.5 per cent match."

"Only identical twins would ever be 100 per cent match."

Last year, Beth asked her doctor to carry out a routine blood test, thinking she had an iron deficiency, because she had been feeling unusually tired, but got the devastating news back she had leukaemia.

It could take up to a year for Beth to be well enough to take up her Northumbria University place as a trainee nurse.

Sharon said: "It is so hard at times, but you have to stay positive."

"We have met other people who are still waiting for a bone marrow match, so no matter how horrible it is for us, you know there are other people who have it worse."



**SCHOOL'S IN:** Aimee and Beth with St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy.

## Pupils' £1,000 charity donation

THE youngsters at St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy have raised more than £1,000 after hearing of the courage of former pupil Beth.

When Beth was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, she decided to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Along with her sister, Aimee, who shaved her hair off for the charity, the pair have raised more than £1,300 for the trust, which provides care and equipment for patients and their families at the RVI.

When staff and pupils at the school, in Thornhill Terrace, heard about Beth's illness, they wanted to help and Year 8 students set about doing a number of activities to raise money.

Beth said: "It's nice to know that the school is

thinking of me. It's also nice to know that my experiences can help other people."

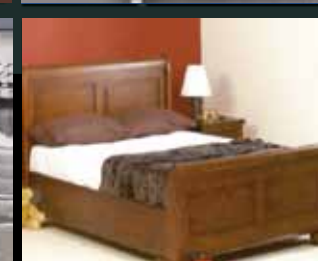
"You can see the money being directly used in the hospital."

St Anthony's teacher, Ruth Abbs, who organised the fund-raising, said: "Every Christmas at St Anthony's each year group chooses a charity to donate to."

"Year 8 had already voted to support the work of Teenage Cancer Trust and when I heard the news about Beth, I asked the girls if we could donate to the charity in Beth's name, to support them in the selfless act that she and her sister were doing."

"Beth and her family were over the moon to hear that Year 8 raised an amazing £1,000 to add to the amount they had already raised."

**We offer**  
**FREE**  
**delivery and assembly**  
**We can also arrange for**  
**your old bed to be removed**



**Jacksons**  
**BED CENTRE**

8 Queens Court, Leechmere  
Industrial Estate,  
Tel. 0191 523 8833  
Open 9am - 5pm Mon - Sat

www.jacksonsbedcentre.com

Drive directly up to the front door, great wheelchair access



**LARGE FREE CAR PARK**