

# Challenges Make Us Stronger

*When one of our student's sister was asked to write a speech for a public speaking competition at school, she responded with the following.....*

“Everybody faces different challenges every day. It may be something like learning something new at school or it may be something like beating an old swimming time. However, some people face challenges just by getting out of bed in the morning. When my little sister, Olivia Leadbeatter, was two she was diagnosed with Ataxic Cerebral Palsy and Intellectual Disability. This means that Olivia has difficulty with speech, balance, muscle co-ordination and all of her motor skills. So every day things that most people take for granted like walking, talking, throwing a ball, writing their name or colouring in a picture is something that my sister Olivia finds very hard and challenging. With her daily challenges comes a lot of frustration for Olivia because she gets annoyed that she can't do things like every body else.

It all becomes too hard for Olivia and she becomes naughty and has bad behaviours because of her frustrations and lack of understanding of why she is different to others - which then becomes a challenge for our whole family. With this comes great responsibility and pressure. We try to protect her from being run over or kidnapped because she is not afraid of anything and is very vulnerable. This is not the only thing we try to protect her from; there is also teasing and judgement. Sometimes people stare because of her tantrums, different behaviours, or even the way she walks and dribbles. Sometimes she is in a pram because she is too tired to walk or on a child's lead because she is always running away. This makes us feel bad and sometimes very sad. But not everything is bad, my sister knows how to make us laugh with some of the things she says and does.



*Julia came second in the finals of the competition but more importantly made an unforgettable impression on her teachers and class mates and made her parents very proud!*

Olivia has a cheeky personality and a great sense of humour and will never let her disability get her down. She is very motivated and faces every challenge all day long and won't be beaten by them. So challenges make life difficult sometimes, however, they also make us stronger and more capable when we have accomplished something that we found challenging.

I think we need challenges in our lives to help us learn and grow and become better people. When we have faced certain challenges we can then teach others how to cope and get through challenging times. So I challenge you to not be scared of challenges, but to face them head on and do the best you can. Also when you see someone with a disability, try to think of how challenging even the little things are for some people”.

**Julia Leadbeatter**, 11 years old