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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **The sky's the limit for charity**

## **Flight Angels 2016 helping children with life-limiting illnesses**

**Over the Wall UK CEO Kevin Mathieson explains why his charity needs your support...**

'We don't know how you've done it but you've given us back our fun-loving, happy daughter we thought we'd lost when she fell ill two years ago'

That accolade sums up, in just a few words, the power of the work done by the team at Over the Wall.

At the helm of the organisation, the only UK-based member of Paul Newman's global SeriousFun Network of camps for children affected by life-limiting illnesses, is former senior police officer Kevin Mathieson.

After retiring as Chief Constable of Tayside Police, following a career across several forces and time spent on attachment to the Home Office in London, Kevin was looking for a new challenge. Little did he know he would find it becoming a full-time job, after signing up as a volunteer for a little-known charity.

Over the Wall UK's mission is to help seriously ill children and their families reach beyond the pain, distress and unhappiness of life-limiting illness. Its therapeutic recreation camps across England and Scotland, delivered at no cost to the children's families, help the youngsters discover a whole new world of possibilities.

Kevin was hooked, and after getting ever more involved in the charity's work, he took on the role of CEO in 2011.

Kevin said: "The children we support typically often have very low confidence and self-esteem. They also tend to be isolated from their peers, lonely and set apart.

"Life-limiting illnesses and disabilities often stop them from participating in mainstream life. Many have complex medical needs.

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"Our camps offer climbing, swimming, abseiling, canoeing, arts and crafts, music, drama and creative writing. Everything is designed to enable every child to participate, and expertly managed to ensure that no child will fail.

"We go beyond giving children a great week. Our camps have a lasting impact. We encourage and enable kids to reach beyond the barriers of their illnesses and restore their hope for the future."

It's fantastic work, but it comes at a cost. Always on the lookout for new ways to raise vital funds, Kevin was introduced to aviation journalist and flight sim veteran Jane Rachel Whittaker. The pair got talking, and Kevin's detective instincts spotted an opportunity to deliver an event different from anything he'd been involved in before.

"Jane spoke about an online event he and a friend and fellow flight sim enthusiast had delivered in 2012. Without any major publicity or promotion, they had raised in excess of \$50,000 over a weekend of online flight sim events.

"From those conversation, Flight Angels 2016 took off."

Kevin added: "The money will enable us offer places at our life changing camps to many more children living with serious and life limiting illnesses.

"I recently spoke to one of our mums, who summed it up perfectly.

*'Camp has taught us how important it is to make the most of every happy moment we have with our loved ones and to live each day for what it is; to not live in fear, to believe in the positive and to look forward to tomorrow. Over The Wall camp is more than just a summer camp. It is proof that when I tell my son Harlem life can be beautiful and fun.'*

Kevin concluded: "As a charity we rely entirely on fundraised income and donations to run our camps, which are provided at no cost to the families we support. Every single penny counts. Flight Angels 2016 can and will make a huge difference."

Here's how donations will help:

- £20 will pay for a seriously ill child to try a new sport like kayaking, archery or climbing. For the vast majority of our campers, these will be brand new experiences that they would never have dreamt they could do.
- £50 will provide a Discovery Box, T-shirt and brilliance beads for one of our campers. Discovery Boxes are full of tangible reminders of camp and all that each child have achieved. The children cherish and continue to draw strength from them way after camp has ended.
- £100 will pay for enough medication syringes to support a single camp (supporting up to 65 children). Medical care is provided by our wonderful team of volunteer doctors and nurses who run our on site medical facility or 'beach hut' as its is known.

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- £500 will pay for transportation to and from one of our camps, which we provide to all campers, so that cost of travel is never a barrier to attending. Campers are chaperoned en route by experienced medical volunteers.
- £1,000 will pay for the whole cost of accommodating a child at one of our Siblings Camps, where siblings of children with serious illnesses are given the chance to, in their words "have fun without feeling guilty".
- £1,500 will pay for a place at one of our genuinely life changing Health Challenge Camps, for children aged 8-17 with serious and life changing illnesses.

**Details of how to take part in Flight Angels 2016 are available on the website - [www.flight-angels.com](http://www.flight-angels.com) - where you can also learn more about the charities, make a donation, book a seat on Concorde or get ready fly into battle in a F16.**

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