

## **Old Girls' Outstanding Achievement Award: Rebecca Turner**

**Deputy Head Girl Ananya Ajit and Boys' Division Sixth Former Harry Adams interviewed Rebecca about her time at School, her career and her dedication to the Blue Skies Hospitals Fund.**

Rebecca's favourite subject at School was Product Design, which translates well into her current career as a Design Technology teacher. She recalls enjoying English and, by her own admission, hating Science, since although she still got the grades through lots of hard work, she found it quite difficult in comparison.

After taking what she described as the 'traditional' and quite 'ordinary' path to becoming a teacher, Rebecca worked her way up to be given responsibilities as the Head of the Product Design department at her school. After always feeling 'at home' in the Product Design department at Bolton School, she gained that sense of belonging in her full-time teaching job. It was in May 2020, however, that Rebecca's brother, Tom, passed away from acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and everything changed.

Having spoken with Tom about the funds he had wanted to raise for others in his position, Rebecca was determined to make a difference and began a fundraising campaign to honour his memory and his final wishes. She went part-time at her school and used her small-business making colourful wool and rope rainbows to raise money for the Blue Skies Hospitals Fund along with her friends and family. Rebecca provided some samples of her products for us at School, with spaces to write messages for anyone who's having a hard time. Using her Instagram following Rebecca began to fundraise with raffles and events which she carried out with her mum and Tom's friends and she continues to raise money to this day. Her success, along with those who have helped her, have led to funds of over £25,000 being raised, allowing for the creation of hand-painted murals in patient side rooms and three 'at-home' chemotherapy machines that will allow patients to receive chemotherapy in their own homes.

When asked how Bolton School has helped her in making her charity work a success, Rebecca spoke about the confidence that School has given her and the way in which she was nurtured in such a safe space to believe that she was capable of anything. By her own admission, she wasn't the most 'academically' driven student at School, but the friendships she made and the communicative skills she gained from the School environment are what she really values from her time here. She even ran into one of her old teachers, Mrs Pritchard during our interview, and shared some funny stories about the rest of her School experience with us.

Rebecca believes that the greatest advice she can give is to do what makes you happiest. She recalls the fact that after going part-time at her first school, she was given an ultimatum either to go back full-time or not return. She chose to move to another school, focusing on her fundraising work and other interests, and is now able to balance her teaching job at Balshaw's Church of England High School with running her business, Fred and Pearl. She says that this decision was solely based on what she thought would make her happiest, and that it has overwhelmingly benefited her since she is now able to speak about her brother and share his message and his memory.

Going forward Rebecca plans to leave her job as a teacher and open a play café, in which she will teach young children the basics of design technology. We wish her all the best with this endeavour as she has truly inspired us with the work she has done and continues to do to support those who need it the most.