



PRESS RELEASE

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PICS

Dad's 1000 Mile Run Helps Daughter's Recovery

A NURSE has been able to speak about her mental health openly for the first time in her life, after her dad ran 1000 miles to tackle the stigma around it.

Margaret Dunlop, 31, has experienced anxiety and an eating disorder since she was in her teens but had struggled to speak to anyone for years, as she was worried about how people would react.

But three years ago, she met her dad Jim McClung for the first time in 27 years, and he recognised that Margaret was struggling and encouraged her to get help.

After realising how long Margaret had been unwell and how difficult it was for her to tell anyone because of the stigma attached to mental health, Jim, from Dalrymple in Ayrshire, decided he wanted to make a difference.

With his 50th birthday coming up Jim decided to run 1000 miles to raise awareness of the issue, while fundraising for mental health programme See Me.

In the last 12 months Jim and Margaret have travelled the length and breadth of Britain together taking part in marathons, half marathons and 10ks in Glasgow, Loch Ness, Sheffield, Sussex and more. In between that Jim has been running daily to clock up the miles.

The runs have brought the pair closer together and for the first time Margaret now feels confident in speaking to people around her about how she is feeling. She has even had people who have been through similar things reach out to her online.

Margaret said: "People have been really supportive since they found out about my illness and it gives me the confidence to speak to people when I'm not feeling great.

"It's definitely helped me. I know who to speak to now about how I'm feeling. I've also had people speak to me about how they suffered with depression and other mental health issues and ask my advice and where to get help.

"But it's good to be able to speak to people who have had similar experiences, and they have also suffered with stigma and been though that like me.

"We all have mental health and everyone should feel its ok to speak about it. It's like if you had a broken arm people would recognise that you had something wrong, this can be an invisible illness and should be recognised more.

"Running has really helped my recovery as it has given my structure around my eating and something to focus on and helps me when I'm suffering badly from anxiety and panic attacks.

"People often wonder why I run and focus on running so much but it has helped my recovery, which is the reason why I take on some running challenges. I am taking part in the London marathon this year and the training so far has helped alleviate some of my anxiety symptoms."

Machine operator Jim completed his challenge on December 22nd, the day of his 50th birthday, which the family celebrated with a huge party. This week he handed over the £450 he raised for See Me, and he is determined to carry on speaking about mental health.

He said: "The runs have been amazing. It's been a good journey. I'm really happy I've done it.

"People have been saying it is an amazing thing to do, to run 1000 miles. More people in my workplace now speak to me about mental health, as well as people who are close to Margaret.

"I did this to raise awareness because I've seen first-hand the impact mental health and stigma and discrimination can have on someone.

"I think it all goes back to stigma and Margaret never being able to feel she could speak about it. So, I think a lot of positives have come out of the challenge, especially for Margaret and her recovery.

"When you're running with people you get to talk to them and explain why you're doing it. I had a guy who ran with me who had seen what I was doing and was inspired to join me.

"People also talk to you about their experiences when you start talking about it. From doing this I've seen how important it is that people can speak about how they feel.

“If I can make a difference for others now I want to, especially in workplaces.

“Anything that helps people talk is a good thing. It’s all about tackling the stigma and changing situations where people don’t want to talk about it.”

While Margaret has seen a change for herself, she still sees there is a lot to be done. She added: “If I speak about it then there might be someone else who is sitting at home suffering who sees my story, they see there is help out there and it’s ok to speak out.”

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: “What Jim and Margaret have done is amazing and the impact it has had on both of them shows that talking about mental health does make a huge difference to people’s lives.

“We all have mental health, so we all need to start talking about it. Any of us could go through a period when we’re struggling so we all need to be comfortable reaching out and asking someone if they are okay.”

ENDS...

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. See Me is Scotland’s National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

We do this by:

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
 - Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
 - Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld
2. Follow See Me on Twitter @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, <http://seemescotland.tumblr.com/>, <https://medium.com/@seemescotland>, or at www.seemescotland.org

3. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief
4. We work in partnerships with VOX, the Scottish Mental Health Cooperative and the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival to bring about a meaningful change in behaviours.

