

# Meet OTW Camper Lila

Forty- five year old Rebecca Joseph first noticed something wasn't quite right with her daughter Lila when her then one year old daughter's stomach looked misshapened. After taking Lily to doctors and various hospitals her daughter was finally diagnosed with Tuberous Sclerosis with chronic polycystic kidney disease. "Basically you can get growths on any organ of the body," Rebecca notes, "and they are usually benign—but not always. Lily has growths on her kidneys and face...but the majority of people who have this disease suffer from epilepsy or autism because they have growths on the brain."

Lila has to have her condition carefully monitored—and has to take medication every day. One of the other ways doctors keep track of Lila's kidney condition is to study Lila's blood. "The problem with that is that Lila has a phobia about needles!" Rebecca notes. She is terrified of them!" In order to work on this fear Rebecca engaged a play therapist named Claire at the Birmingham Children's Hospital. It just so happened that Claire was a volunteer at Over The Wall.

Claire thought the camp would be a perfect for Lila, now eleven. "Talking to Claire and other families who have had their children go to Over The Wall, I knew Lila would have a brilliant time," Rebecca notes, "and she did!"

Although Rebecca admits to being a little worried about sending her daughter to camp ("it was the longest Lila had been away from home") Rebecca knew her daughter would be well looked after. "I was a little bit anxious...but it was so reassuring to know her medication would be given properly and should anything happen there was a full medical staff on hand."



Rebecca contends that Lila's experience at camp could not have come at a better time. "At the age Lila is the thing you want most in the world is to fit in with your peers," Rebecca says. "Having any kind of serious health condition means you are different. Lila has struggled with the fact that she looked different from her classmates and had to take medicine and put cream on her face....so it was just lovely for her to realize that she wasn't alone. She saw that other children have health conditions, too. Lila is about to move to secondary school which is a big deal. The confidence Lila got in camp was so lovely....as was the fact that she now knows that her health condition does not have to define her. That knowledge made her feel really better about things and her future. Over The Wall was brilliant for her confidence."

Outside of meeting other children with serious health challenges at camp Rebecca emphasises that Lila also had fun. "Lila's least favourite time in camp was the rest hour after lunch! She threw herself into all the activities and loved being at the dorm and chatting at night...and singing camp songs."

Rebecca feels so strongly about Over The Wall that she wants Lila to attend another Health Challenges Camp –and she is also going to apply for her younger son to attend Siblings camp! "Over The Wall is a fantastic charity," Rebecca notes, "I would recommend it to anyone and everyone. In fact, I already have!"

