



A LETTER FROM OUR YOUNG AMBASSADOR, LAUREN

Hello everyone, my name is Lauren and I am extremely proud to be one of BBC Children in Need's Young Ambassadors. I'm based in West Yorkshire and I'm 23 years old. I love listening to The Script and my dream is to be a television presenter, representing the disabled community.

MY STORY

I was diagnosed with a brain tumour when I was eighteen months old after my parents were concerned that things didn't seem right. I would scream when going over speed humps, get really bad headaches and constantly bump into things. My parents were so worried that they pushed for a healthcare nurse to see me, who then insisted that I went straight to A&E. Within the day, I was told I had a brain tumour, rushed in for a thirteen-hour operation and then treated with a course of chemotherapy. Following this, I had multiple operations on my hand and foot, blood transfusions and a skin graft, all to make me better.

I was then in remission for three years before the brain tumour came back. I was taken back in for an eleven-hour operation and a course of radiotherapy.

I found school incredibly difficult because I felt judged and bullied by some of the other students. Mental health is more important than ever, yet people often don't understand the underlying and ongoing issues someone may be facing. Luckily, The Brain Tumour Charity, supported by BBC Children in Need, gave me the opportunity to join their Young Ambassadors programme - which changed my life! It's built my confidence and taught me that there's no such thing as not being 'normal'. I've become part of a community of individuals who understand and relate to everything that I experienced and continue to go through. I have so many friends now!!!!

Following this experience, I was invited to become a BBC Children in Need Young Ambassador. I feel so lucky to be part of such a special programme and to work alongside a dynamic and truly inspiring team of young people. It still feels like a dream to work with the best people to help others. I've grown in confidence, but I still get a little down when occasionally I'm treated differently because of my disability and its long-term effects. We should all be looking out for one another and helping others more. Be that bit kinder; be more aware and ready to help someone if they're struggling or alone. After over a decade of continuous treatment and countless operations, I have been in remission for around 8 years now and I'm making the most of my life. I'm lucky to be healthy and happy, but thousands of other children and young people need your support!

With the help of incredible fundraisers like you, who raise amazing amounts of money, BBC Children in Need can continue to fund local life-changing projects across the UK. We need your help more than ever this year. Whether you get involved by throwing a bake-sale, hosting a non-uniform day or getting involved with Challenge Yourself to 25, your support helps to transform the lives of children and young people.

**THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART,
LAUREN**

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OUR STUDENT HUB OR
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