

Swim of Courage raises funds for cancer

"It was the thought of Natalie Cohen and the courage that she and her family have shown over the last year that kept me going," says extreme swimmer and Table View estate agent Toni Enderli on completing his 15km Swim of Courage in aid of cancer on Human Rights Day.

The Swim of Courage follows the route from Big Bay to Robben Island and back. It was by no means an easy swim and Enderli admits to hitting a current about two kilometres before Robben Island which kept him static for about 15 minutes. "It's like hitting a wall but it gave me time to reflect on why I was doing this, and spurred me on to complete the course," he says. "The fact that it was Human Rights Day made it all the more appropriate. Cancer affects so many people and we all deserve a quality life - this swim is helping Natalie's family pay her medical bills but also raising awareness of cancer."

Rare form of bone cancer

Eleven year old Natalie was diagnosed in January 2011 with an extremely rare form of bone cancer known as a Chordoma. The cancer could not be treated in South Africa and so her parents took her to Boston in America where she endured aggressive and life saving surgery and extensive proton radiation treatment. She has been supported by a growing network of people who are following her inspiring story through her website www.nataliescircleoflove.org.

The medical costs of treatment is astronomical and Natalie is not covered by medical insurance outside of South Africa. She returned to her home in Cape Town in October last year and is now focused on rehabilitation.

Easing the financial burden

The Swim of Courage is an initiative started by Martin Goodman to raise funds for children suffering from cancer. Funds raised by Enderli will help ease the financial burden shouldered by Natalie's family. It takes approximately 12 000 strokes to complete the Swim of Courage and it was Enderli's plan to 'sell' each of his swim strokes for R20 with the objective of raising a total of R240 000 to put towards Natalie's medical expenses. Donations can still be made and he encourages everyone to take this small step in making a difference to a child's life.

Enderli did the swim in five hours and four minutes, achieving his personal best of two hours and 21 minutes on the outward route. Whilst the water temperatures were lower (12.7°C) than recommended for this type of extreme swim he was determined not to wait any longer. He admits though that he did not realise the effect the temperature had on his body and on arrival back at Big Bay it took the medical team over an hour to restore his body temperature from 32°C back to a normal 37°C.

For more information Enderli can be contacted at toni@enderli.co.za.

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