

Schoolboy is hero of hospital appeal



HONOURED: Andrew, 17

He's on course to meet his £20,000 target

A CARING 17-year-old student has raised more than £4,850 towards the Oxford Children's Hospital campaign.

And by next year, Andrew Baker hopes to have raised £20,000 towards the cost of building the new hospital.

Andrew, of King Walk, Didcot, has been raising money toward the £15million campaign target since January 2003.

His first event raised £1,000.

Andrew, who is studying for his A-levels and is taking a BTEC ICT course and an applied business studies course at St Birinus School in Didcot, is also a patient at the Radcliffe Infirmary and is under the supervision of its Cranio-facial unit.

Andrew was first admitted after banging his head in a playground accident at primary school 10 years ago. Three years later a lump appeared and he started to complain of pains in his head.

He underwent a major operation in February 2001 to remove the lump that was pressing against his brain – a condition called hydrocephalus. Since then, Andrew has to have regular check-ups.

"I've been so determined to do so much for the campaign for Oxford's Children's Hospital," said Andrew.

"Having undergone major surgery at the Radcliffe Infirmary, whose facilities – both in the children's ward and outpatients' area – are outdated

and not designed for little people's big needs, I decided to do something about it. That's when I set about organising fundraising events. These have included a 10-hour sponsored walk and abseiling, non-uniform days, Christmas tie days, and smaller events like catchphrase and guess-the-teacher competitions.

"I have also set up a website at www.st-birinus.oxon.sch.uk/oche to

boost funds. My school was so impressed with my fundraising efforts that I was entered into the 2003 local heroes award and received the Young Person of the Year accolade."

Andrew is planning another fundraising event – a themed fancy dress day for sixth formers – in March.

Andrew's final aim is to raise at

least another £20,000 through his online website and a sponsored silence for years seven to 10. If each pupil receives £20 in sponsorship the amount raised will be in the region of £18,000.

Andrew added: "I have raised an amazing amount so far, but it was with the great support I've had from both St Birinus and the sixth form – and I'm grateful to them all."

And Tory leader adds his support

CONSERVATIVE leader David Cameron made a whistle-stop tour of Oxford's new Children's Hospital on Friday.

The Witney MP, left, is pictured with Newbury MP Richard Benyon visiting the Headley Way site to see how the project was progressing.

Campaigners have already raised almost £9million and are confident of hitting the £15million target by the time the hospital takes its first patients in January 2007.



Picture: MARC WEST