

# The Big Shave 2013

small sacrifice - BIG cause

[www.thebigshave2013.org](http://www.thebigshave2013.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

### Charity Headshave – Bald Move for M.E!!

This May 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> is M.E. awareness week and Hampshire resident, 30 year old Amy Hanson, has made the bold decision to shave her head to raise money for two UK M.E. charities!

**Invest in ME** are a charity planning to start the first M.E biomedical research and treatment centre in the U.K. Raising more funds will allow the bio-medical research to begin.

**The 25% M.E. Group** are a support group for severe M.E. sufferers. Their advocacy service gives great support and practical advice. However they have just one worker and a long waiting list. Raising more funds would allow the charity to expand the service.

Both charities are run by volunteers, many of whom have M.E. themselves.

Amy says-

*"I have suffered from this horrid illness M.E. for over a decade and am mostly housebound and often bed bound. Every year I try and do something in my own little way to raise funds for charity, but when you have severe M.E. you are quite limited in what you can do!*

*In the past I've done a sponsored silence and sponsored screen free weekend, as well as giving up Birthday and Christmas money to raise awareness and money for M.E. However, each time that I do, I am very aware that it is only those in the M.E. community or their immediate friends and family who donate. Very rarely does the news travel to the general public. I realised it was going to take something a bit bigger to do this and given that my body won't allow me to bungee jump or parachute jump... sadly, I have made the bold or should I say bald decision to shave my hair off to raise money for charity!! Very drastic I know, especially as a female, however I hope this small sacrifice will show my dedication to the causes I hold dear, as well as the desperate longing to see my friends and myself recover from this horrific illness that is destroying our lives."*

#### About M.E

- M.E. is a neurological illness – classified by the World Health Organisation since 1969.
- M.E. stands for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.
- Myalgic = muscle pain. Encephalomyelitis = inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.
- M.E. may be relapsing and remitting.
- M.E. patients are banned for life from giving blood.
- M.E. is 3 times more prevalent than HIV/AIDS – twice as prevalent as MS.
- M.E. can vary in severity from mild, moderate, severe and very severe.
- 25% of M.E. patients are severely affected – housebound/bedbound (hence 25% M.E Group).
- Those with very severe M.E. may be unable to move, speak or swallow and fed by tube.
- 25,000 M.E. patients in UK are children.
- M.E. patients have no approved drugs for treatment.
- M.E. patients have no NHS access to specialist M.E. consultants.
- M.E. does not discriminate, anyone can be affected.
- There is no dedicated centre of excellence in the UK that treats and researches M.E. as a physical illness. Invest in ME wants to change that.

***"[ME/CFS patients] feels effectively the same every day as an AIDS patient feels two months before death; the only difference is that the symptoms can go on for never-ending decades."*** —Prof. Mark Loveless, Head of the AIDS and ME/CFS Clinic at Oregon Health Sciences University

People donating to the 'The Big Shave 2013' have the option to choose which (of the two charities) to donate to. Several other M.E. sufferers around the country are joining in by shaving their heads. Updates will be posted on the website and social networking sites leading up to the big event.

For more info please go to [www.thebigshave2013.org](http://www.thebigshave2013.org)

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