

# Amy's Story

Amy was born with Cystic Fibrosis (a life threatening disease which affects the lungs and digestive system) but despite her daily regime of medication, physiotherapy and pain, she transcends the difficulties of her life and is an inspiration to the people who know her.

She is an extraordinary young woman who displays deep and sincere compassion for the suffering of others. She has a lively personality with a loud and infectious laugh. She loves her family and friends with passion and no matter how hard things get for her she never gives up.

When Amy was aged between 10 - 12 years her life hung in the balance – her liver was dying. Fortunately after two years on the transplant list she underwent life saving transplant surgery and received a new liver.

During those years on the waiting list there were times when Amy was afraid – fearful she would die before she got a liver and she also worried she may not make it through the operation. Occasionally she struggled with these feelings of trepidation but with resolve that was beyond her years she came to accept the uncertainty of her future and developed an amazing positive attitude.

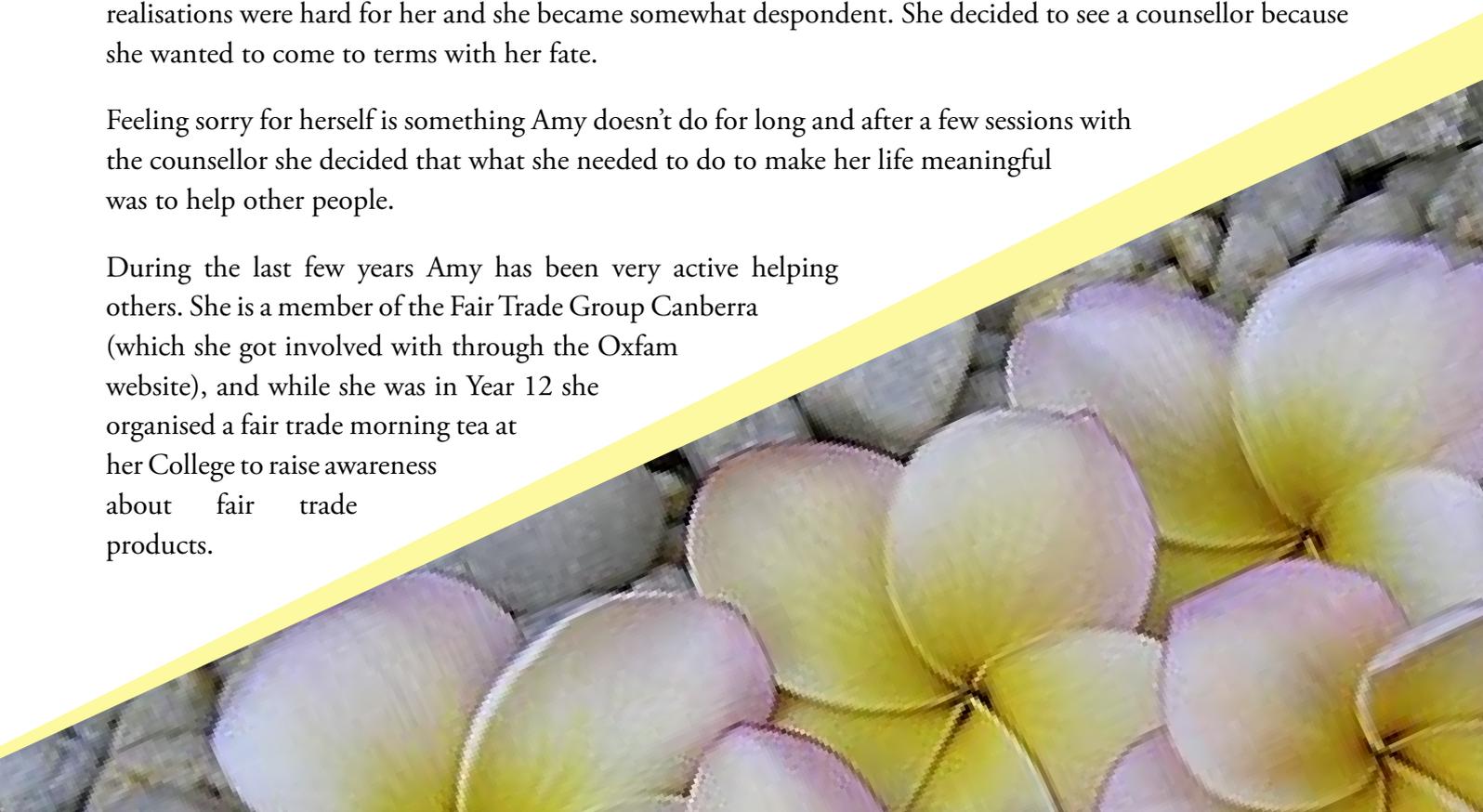
Although the new liver saved her life, she acquired diabetes because of the steroids she was taking to help prevent rejection of her new liver. Injecting the insulin was not easy for her as she hated needles, but as usual Amy overcame this obstacle as she has with all the others.

As Amy was reaching the end of her secondary schooling (Year 10) it became clear to her that her future was very different from her friends. While they were contemplating whether to go to university after finishing college or travel first, Amy was wondering if she would even finish school.

She was also fed up with being chronically ill – a condition she had lived with every moment of her life. These realisations were hard for her and she became somewhat despondent. She decided to see a counsellor because she wanted to come to terms with her fate.

Feeling sorry for herself is something Amy doesn't do for long and after a few sessions with the counsellor she decided that what she needed to do to make her life meaningful was to help other people.

During the last few years Amy has been very active helping others. She is a member of the Fair Trade Group Canberra (which she got involved with through the Oxfam website), and while she was in Year 12 she organised a fair trade morning tea at her College to raise awareness about fair trade products.



After a presentation by World Vision at her College, Amy represented her school at the Global Leadership Convention in 2006. The event is run by World Vision with the aim of creating global leaders who have the vision and values to change the world for the better.

For the past several years Amy has walked many miles to help with the St Vincent de Paul door knock appeals. Despite her medical conditions she didn't hesitate to help raise money for this worthy charity. She has also participated in the 'Walk Against Want' events during the same period.

The RSPCA has also benefited from her generous spirit. Amy was a volunteer with them during 2005 but had to give it away because she got a part-time job to help make ends meet at home.

In February 2006 Amy travelled to Adelaide with the 'Flame of Life' (a symbolic device representing the life giving gift of organ and tissue donation) where she participated in a symbolic ceremony with the South Australian Health Minister, donor family members and other organ and tissue recipients.

Even with a full life Amy became a cyber activist for Greenpeace and was the co-leader of her ex-school's Social Action Group, which was set up to support a variety of charities and promote awareness about social justice issues.

Amy's dream is to one day travel to Africa so she can spend her life helping others. She has been warned not to go as it may greatly compromise her health because the medical care in these countries is not adequate for someone with a life threatening medical condition. But she wants to live her life doing the things that will make her happy – she is not afraid of death but rather not living a meaningful life.

Amy is a bright and beautiful light in a sometimes weary world. Her effervescent personality, good humour and selfless attitude makes the world a much better place. Knowing her enriches the lives of all the people lucky enough to know her.

This remarkable young woman is my niece.

