

OWN HEALTH PROBLEMS TO CHANGE LIVES



Fortune favours brave

Dad helped by charity hero goes on TV show to raise cash for his Good Causes



▲ GRATEFUL Stephen and Sinead MacCarrey with, from left, Amelia, Leo and Daniel

Stephen was going on the programme to raise money for ER Good Causes, as a way of thanking the charity.

While Holding Out For A Hero is about recognising the generosity of ER Good Causes, Russell's own story is a stirring, inspirational tale of triumph over hugely difficult circumstances.

On his eighth birthday, he was rushed from his party to Yorkhill Hospital attached to a drip to bring his sugar level down.

He said: "As a kid you take it in your stride but it must have been horrendous for my parents."

By the time he was 22, the diabetes was robbing him of his eyesight. Even though he was getting laser treatment four days a week, he ended up blind.

An operation in London on his right eye was unsuccessful, but one on his

left, three months later, managed to reattach the retina. But because of the heavy duty laser treatment, 95 per cent of his vision had been destroyed.

Nevertheless he refused to be beaten and set up his own business leasing videos to shops.

But the diabetes was still destroying his body and by the time he was 40 his kidney function was at eight per cent.

This meant that when his blood sugar was low he wasn't getting the warning hypoglycemia signs and so nearly went into a coma and died.

He was put on the waiting list for a transplant and, after a second donation, became only the 76th person to get a pancreas and kidney replacement in Scotland that also cured his diabetes.

"If you go through the list of people ER Good Causes has helped, there are

ones who have gone through harder shifts than me," he said.

"I've had a brilliant life and I'm continuing to do so."

His rock is his wife Yvonne, also 46.

They celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary in August.

They had been in the same class at school and Yvonne claims he took her to the primary six school dance - although he doesn't remember it.

They were briefly friends as teenagers but hadn't seen each other for 20 years when they got back in touch through Friends Reunited eight-and-a-half years ago. They now run a pet supplies business together.

Russell, who has an 18-year-old daughter, Nicola, from a previous relationship, said: "To be honest, I never dreamed for a minute I would

get to £100,000 - but to my amazement, we are getting there thanks to the brilliant support we have had from all aspects of our community. I suspect another target will need to be set.

"I will definitely be continuing ER Good Causes and hope to see this template used in other areas to help in the coming years when cutbacks will require all of us to pull together to help our neighbours."

● **Holding Out For A Hero is on STV at 7pm tomorrow.**

To donate to Russell's charity, go to www.ergoodcauses.co.uk



▲ SUPPORT Charity fundraiser Russell Macmillan and his wife Yvonne

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