

Meet Julie and Jordan. Julie was the lucky winner of our Carers' Tip competition in the May edition of Caring Matters.

Her tip was "surround yourself with positive people, family and friends and try to smile even when you want to scream and cry".

"I am a single Mam to two adopted children age 2 and 14 both with "additional needs". Jordan has bowel issues along with social and emotional difficulties and Freya has cerebral palsy, hearing loss, heart defect and behavioural issues. I adopted through a local Durham charity agency DFW who have been a great support and I helped set up a Single Adopters group to give support and advice to other singletons! I worked at Tudhoe Colliery School for 19.5yrs but had to give it up this year as my little girl has significant needs and a huge amount of appointments..... Doctors, physio, occupational therapist, speech therapists, portage etc!!

Life has changed dramatically since taking on two children with a range of needs, I've had to adapt to becoming a mother, father, doctor, therapist, teacher, counsellor and carer which has been quite difficult. At times I feel bogged down and have to find that extra strength to get to the next appointment or calm my daughter through her next major paddy or juggle making tea with doing physio on Freya and helping Jordan with homework. Thankfully I have amazing family who help out all they can and a fab best friend who lets me offload and counsels me then takes me to Dancefit where I get to dance off my stresses and woes!!!"

"I think it's so important carers take time out to love and nurture themselves, caring is such a wonderfully rewarding thing to do but can be very draining and physically and emotionally demanding! I found dancing is my outlet and luckily my friend Sharon always knows how to cheer me up!!! It's a hard balance but such a worthwhile one as I have two children I love with all my heart and who need me and rely on me to be the best I can be. Every day brings a new challenge but also a new big milestone and a new reason to smile and laugh..... which is the best medicine in the world!!!"

Julie said "I haven't given Jordan the iPod yet, he's going to tidy his room first!!! Thank you so much for this wonderful gift, I've never won anything like this before so I'm extremely grateful".

You are very welcome Julie, we hope Jordan enjoys it and keeps his room tidy!!!