



**Run with your Heart**

# **- RUBY WARNER - SPIRIT OF SPORTS AWARD**

**The Story of Ruby Jane Warner  
11th September 2007 – 17th July 2020  
#forever12**

Ruby was a fun-loving, smart, happy and grounded child. She grew up in a normal family and was the eldest of 4 children, with sisters Sarah and Lucy, and youngest brother Luke.

Ruby had a warmth about her. A caring nature that resonated early in her life to everyone. She was a kid at heart and loved to just run and play, but had a unique presence about her that endeared her to all ages, from grandparents to adults and to kids.

Ruby loved school and was fascinated by learning. Her ability to solve problems, think on her feet, remember and learn quickly amazed us right throughout her life, and was often on display. She was certainly talented academically, but Ruby's real passion and love was sports.

Ruby loved sports. It started in the backyard with bikes, running and then graduated to Little Athletics at the age of 8, then into basketball at the age of 9.

Ruby's goal was to run for Australia at the Olympics and she was moving into more specialist 800m and 1500m running, with some success and achievements at state level.

Ruby wanted to run; on a weekend she would ask "can we go for a run? Can we train?". Her desire to work and train hard made her well known at Enfield Little Athletics, where she would train with a specialist coach twice a week. In the lead up to big events her work ethic was unbelievable. Hours and hours would be spent in the long jump pit or on the 400m track. She was amazingly professional and dedicated in her preparation.

"I love to run" she would often comment. "Running makes me feel free".

For Ruby, however determined or focused she was about what she was doing, she was different. She had a caring spirit about her that continued to draw her attention to others, other siblings, family members, other students and other athletes / teammates.

Ruby had an interest in others and only saw goodness. Whether the teammate or competitor was at her skill level, ability or otherwise, Ruby only saw goodness in people as many would attest. She allowed herself only to see and think positively and was never critical, threatened or worried about others.



As a year 4 student, Ruby's school class attended an Aquatics excursion day at West Lakes. A number of the children were left behind and could not attend, and spent the day back at school. We remember clearly asking Ruby how the day was and she said simply "good, but there were 3 people that could not come as their parents could not afford it".

She was genuinely concerned and this was foremost in her thoughts. This discussion would take shape over that night and the next week. Ruby would then approach the school and Principal, with her mum, to see what she could do about it. Could she use her birthday money to pay for others to come to the next excursion set for term 2? We never realised it at the time but her thoughts, understanding and care for others to be included, and not be left behind or excluded, developed at such a young age.

Ruby was diagnosed with a rare form of Cancer in June 2019 just when she was beginning to really shine and blossom in her athletics, basketball and school. Ruby would undergo 15 months of Chemotherapy, Radiation Therapy, hundreds of tests and days in hospital. Her spirit never changed, even when the ability to compete in sports was taken from her. Ruby would attend her team's basketball games as often as she could and would sit on the bench with the coaching staff during games, to support her teammates.

Ruby continued to raise money for others, including donating money that was raised by her supporters specifically for her, to ensure everyone had access and could participate in sports.

Ruby fought to save her own life with everything she had and never gave up. Ruby passed away peacefully at home on the 17th July 2020. Her courage and spirit continue to be an inspiration to many that knew her.

Ruby was a simple girl, but more complex under the surface, than anyone would ever know.

Her life was short but her story is such a strong and powerful one, of love and laughter, love of sports and competition, but of compassion and positivity, of hard work but of complete care for others and their feelings.

Ruby wanted everyone to have a chance and not feel left out. The love and joy that she found in sports and competition was something that Ruby wanted everyone to experience, and to never be denied from, because of family circumstance or other outside influences.

Thus, for us and anyone that knew Ruby well enough, the Spirit of Sports Award is a reflection of Ruby and everything she stood for. It is a reflection of how Ruby saw the world – of innocence and purity, unspoilt, and seeing the goodness and happiness in everyone.

To be able to participate, have fun and live for those moments in life, allows us to continue living Ruby's dream and remember the amazing person that she was.

