



## **Graham Pither overcomes vertigo to take to the skies for Starlight!**

Jumping out of a plane at 10,000 feet is a brave feat by anyone's standards but for Graham Pither from Hitchin in Hertfordshire, who has a life-long fear of heights, it was nothing short of heroic!

There was a very special reason that Graham, who is 49 years old and a Senior Relationship Manager at RBS Corporate Banking, was prepared to battle his vertigo in order to complete a tandem parachute jump and that was to raise funds for Starlight Children's Foundation.

Starlight grants wishes for seriously and terminally ill children and provides entertainment in hospitals and hospices across the UK. Graham has supported the charity for a while and has volunteered at a number of recent Starlight fundraising events. Knowing that a tandem parachute jump would take him quite literally to the edge, Graham decided that it would be a great way to garner support and raise funds for Starlight.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, Graham arrived at the North London Parachute Centre, which is situated thirty miles north of Cambridge, ready for action. However, the weather was against him and his fellow parachutists and the wind was too strong for them to fly. Determined to complete the challenge, Graham re-booked his jump for Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August, the day before his family holiday to Norfolk.

To ensure a place on the first flight of the day, Graham decided to camp at the airfield the night before. It was pouring with rain but his tent didn't leak and he successfully secured the first place in the queue! Unfortunately the rain continued and Graham had an agonising wait before the sky finally cleared at 3pm and his name was called.

*After the flight, Graham said, "Despite my total fear of heights I really enjoyed the fall and the soft landing. Falling at 100mph for 35 seconds was fun and the gentle parachute ride down was peaceful and gave a wonderful view. It was a huge adrenaline rush and I am very proud to have completed the challenge and raised a great sum for Starlight. It's a fantastic charity and I am really glad that, by conquering my own fear, I will help Starlight to distract very poorly children from the fear and anxiety that they may be feeling as a result of their illnesses."*

You can still sponsor Graham for his challenge – please visit:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/GrahamPither>.

### **Information**

For more information, please contact Henny Vere Nicoll on [henny@starlight.org.uk](mailto:henny@starlight.org.uk) / 020 7262 2881 # 231.

Starlight grants once-in-a-lifetime wishes for seriously and terminally ill children, restoring the magic and fun of childhood and giving the whole family happy memories to share, whatever the future holds.

Starlight also creates entertainment in every hospital and hospice throughout the UK. Sick children go to Starlight parties, laugh their way through pantomimes, go out on Starlight Escapes, play games and watch films on the Starlight Fun Centre, and enjoy the toys and puzzles of the Starlight Distraction Box. Happy children respond better to treatment and Starlight helps children to forget about their illness and simply have a bit of fun.