



Natalie Reeves – February 2007

Natalie is 24 years old and has severe learning difficulties, epilepsy and rheumatoid arthritis and uses a wheelchair. Mum Lynn, whom you can see in the picture tells of the change that football has made to Natalie.

When Natalie was born, it was clear to her parents that something wasn't right and after several years of tests, the doctors diagnosed the chromosome disorder that led to Natalie's disabilities. As Natalie grew up it became clear to mum that she was not good around strangers, crowds or noise and that Natalie was happiest at home and at small gatherings with people that she had known for a long time.

That all changed 5 years ago, when Natalie met David Beckham at a book signing in Manchester, she was in love and football became an attractive game. In a house with two brothers and a dad who followed Spurs and Arsenal, David Beckham has a lot to answer for.



Lynn contacted Manchester United and soon after Natalie went to her first home game. This turned her life around and she took to the life of a football fan, like a duck to water.

Mum explains: Natalie always hated change, noise and strange faces, now she is much more outgoing, she is always making new friends and really enjoys all the social events that MUDSA organises. She is a regular at events such as Bowling and trips to Carrington to watch the players train. On match days, Natalie can be found chatting with her many pals before the game and at half time.

Football has made a difference for the whole family and just recently Natalie joined in celebrations at a restaurant for her dad's birthday, something she would not have previously been able to do. She is much more willing to try new things and meet new people.

Remarkably, following football has given Natalie the incentive to learn to read, something that the doctors said would never happen. She now follows the entire goings on of her favourite players and team on and off the pitch and she has a new hero, Cristiano Ronaldo. David Beckham is no longer top of Natalie's list of pin ups and is out of favour, it's tough being a football star! As for Natalie she is really enjoying life and hoping that her team win lots of trophies this season.